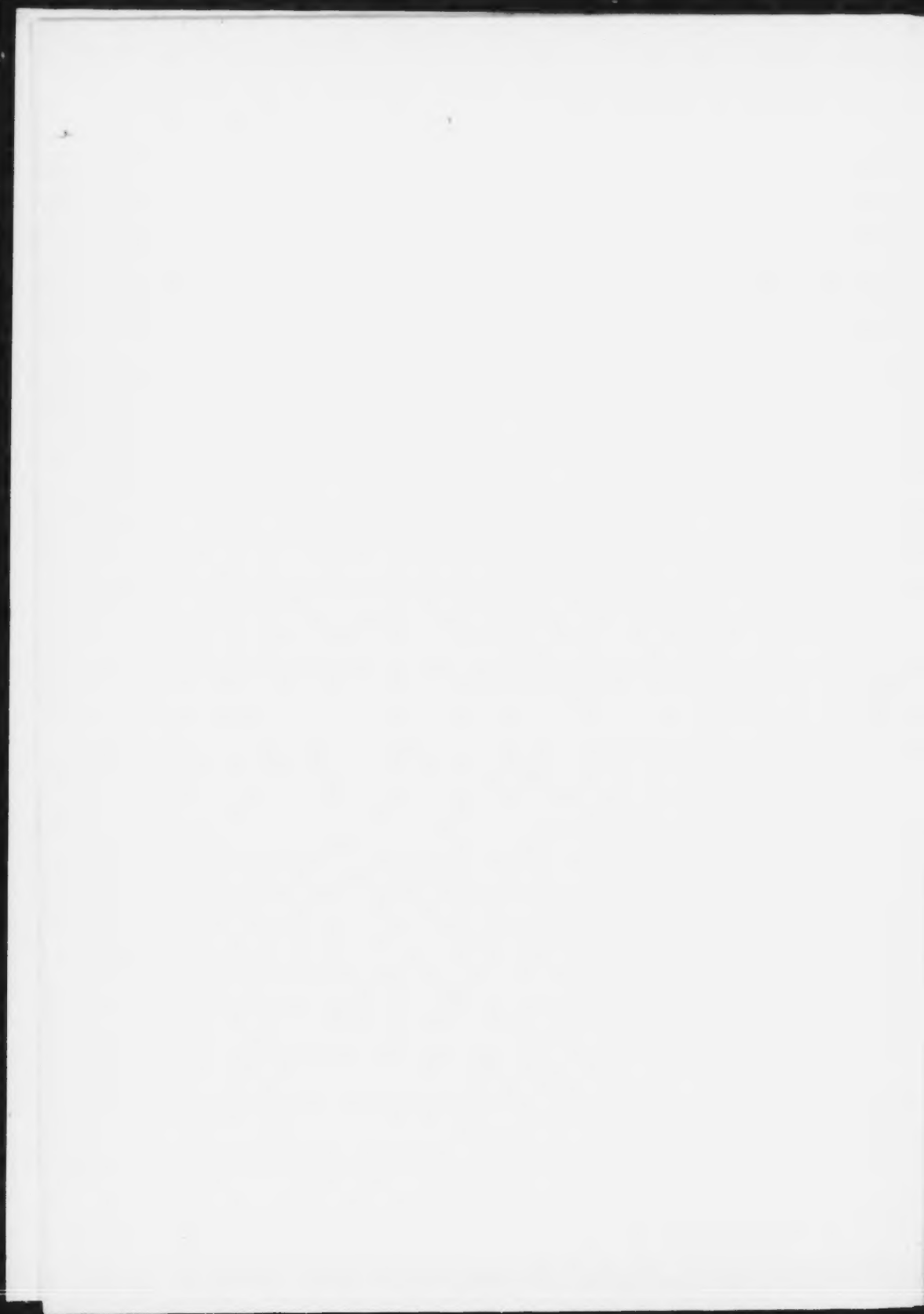




THE GLORY AND THE DREAM



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# THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

BY

ANNA PRESTON

AUTHOR OF "THE RECORD OF A SILENT LIFE"



"Where is it now, the glory and the dream?"

—WORDSWORTH

NEW YORK  
B. W. HUEBSCH  
MCMXV



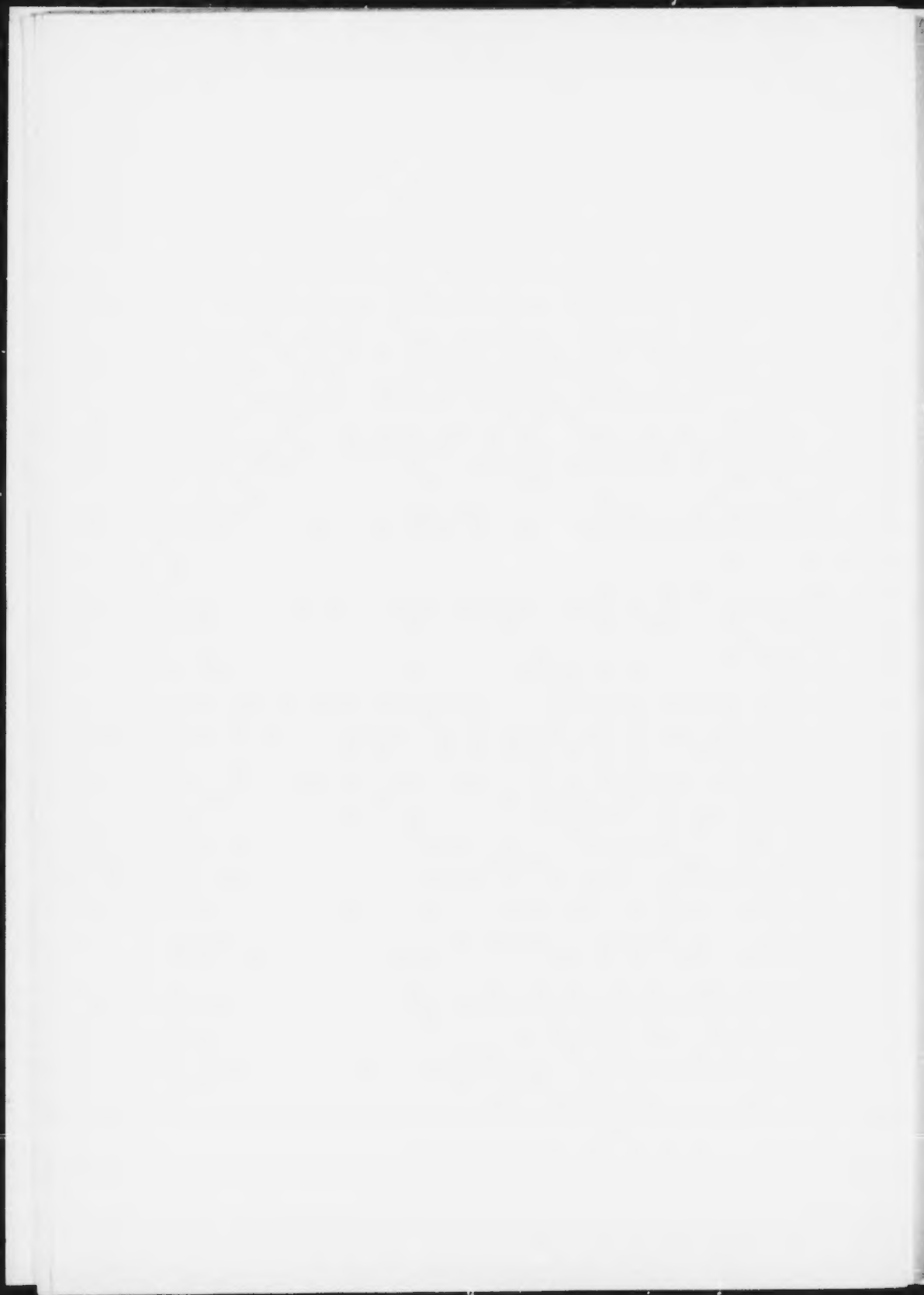
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## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I THE GREAT UNKNOWN . . . . .	1
II THE NEW COUNTRY . . . . .	19
III THE REBEL'S HOUSE . . . . .	32
IV THE PRISONER IN THE BARN . . . . .	42
V "A TUMULTUOUS PRIVACY OF STORM" . . . . .	55
VI NIEDER'S MOTHER . . . . .	63
VII THE FAIRY ROAD . . . . .	86
VIII CHRISTMAS . . . . .	106
IX THE DRIVE TO TOWN . . . . .	124
X OLD COLQUHOUN . . . . .	149
XI THE TOUCAN . . . . .	158
XII THE MURDER OF MR. MUSTEED . . . . .	170
XIII MR. JANE DOVE . . . . .	181
XIV "MONARCH OF ALL I SURVEY" . . . . .	191
XV BRIAN . . . . .	208
XVI CLEARED . . . . .	224
XVII "THE SENSE OF TEARS IN MORTAL THINGS" . . . . .	237



# THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

## CHAPTER I

### THE GREAT UNKNOWN

MICHAEL had spent six joyful years in eagerly, curiously, making the acquaintance of the world into which he had come, before he found a hint of sadness in it. On the contrary, he found it such a beautiful and happy place that he grudged ever to close his eyes, and would vigorously demand an instant release from his crib at the first break of dawn. Meadows full of damp grass, where he was always finding a fresh spot to be happy in; a brook where he wanted to go on and on playing, always, and never stop; the monastery garden, steeped in a mysterious sweetness and quiet, full of

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

monks who were all alike, into which he sometimes strayed; a mother who was sometimes very much in the way, when she made him come in to meals, or washed him, or put him to bed, just as he was running to do some delightful thing that had come into his head, and whom he sometimes hugged and hugged, yet couldn't hug enough; these were a few of the good things that filled up his little life.

He knew, vaguely, that this wasn't everything; that there was something very big and solemn above and beyond, and that he must feel solemn every night when he said his prayers, no matter how many other things he might have to think about. Although he lived in Claddagh, where everybody about him spoke the Irish tongue, his parents spoke English sometimes; but he was better pleased when they spoke Irish. His mother taught him the little prayer that English-speaking children say, and a strange hushed feeling always came over him at the thought of the soul folded up inside of him, which he prayed the Lord to keep. And at the words:—

## THE GREAT UNKNOWN

"And if I die before I wake  
I pray the Lord my soul to take,"

a momentary chill would pass over him at the thought that he might die before he opened his eyes on the delightful world again. But then, he wouldn't. He always woke up all right. But he had a picture in his mind of the soul being taken—a brown, folded, passive thing. The Irish word, *anam*, gave him a very different idea. It made him think of something vague and black, that filled up a person's whole inside. But he really thought very little about it. These ideas were merely images that the words imprinted on his mind, without any thought on his part.

But there came a time when his mother was ill, and his father told him he mustn't run into her room and disturb her. He knew from his father's tone that it would be very dreadful to do that, and he meant to obey; but once he got wildly excited chasing the cat, and first thing he knew he was running after it into her room, shouting:—"You thief! You thief!" Then a languid voice from the bed,

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

saying:—"What has he stolen?" suddenly brought back his father's command, and he hung his head, overcome with shame, and would hardly answer the question. His mother was not angry—she only explained, kindly and patiently, that you never called anybody a thief unless he had stolen something, and this made Michael more deeply ashamed than any reproof could have done. He never forgot again.

At first his mother's illness made no difference to him, except for this incident; his joyful life was not touched or disturbed. He played in the meadow and the brook just the same, the smell of wet grass and steaming earth filled him with the same wild delight, and made him want to run and run, as if he could never be still again. He continued to watch and listen everywhere for fairies, filled with the hope that he would find them in the next clump of grass or weeds he investigated. But after a while his aunts began to come very often, and they were crying whenever he saw them, and his father was silent and sorrowful;

## THE GREAT UNKNOWN

and then, although Michael still did all these things, the warmth and sunshine seemed to go out of them. His mother wanted him to come in and see her every day, and cuddled him up close to her; but one morning when he was brought in, and climbed on the bed to hug her, she didn't hug back, and although she spoke to him, and called him a *chuislín mo chroidhe*, it wasn't like having her speak to him at all. He burst out crying, for he knew something very dreadful was coming, though he had no idea what it was. Next morning his father took him in his arms and told him she was dead.

Michael broke into a loud howl, not because he wanted to cry, but because it was so strange and sudden, so utterly outside his range of experience that he could not even attempt to understand it, and he wanted to drown out all sensation in the physical exercise of making a noise. After that, the bright, fresh world was completely blotted out by the blackness that enveloped everything. Crowds of people in black clothes filled the house, and in the night



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

there were such awful crying noises that Michael could not go to sleep, but sat up in his crib, shivering with horror, and thinking about all the strange things his aunts had said to him that day. They had told him an angel had come and taken his mother's soul away, and he had said:—"Why didn't you tell me when it came? I would have frightened it away!" They had told him that nobody could frighten away the death angel, but Michael insisted that he would have fought with it till it flew away. Then they told him, so solemnly that he knew it must be true, that nobody had ever done that, and the death angel came to everybody. Thus Michael learned that everybody had to die, and he thought of it now with passionate rebellion. He didn't want to die that way, and have everybody turn black and make hideous noises because he died. If he had to die that way, he would rather the stork had never brought him at all. He made up his mind he would die as a patriot fighting the Sacsanaigh, or be a fisherman and get drowned. Then he thought of the death angel taking his

## THE GREAT UNKNOWN

mother's soul to a place called Purgatory, to be burned for a long time before it was taken to Heaven, where every one was perfectly happy. This was what happened to everybody's soul. Tired out at last with these thoughts, Michael lay down and fell asleep with that awful crying in his ears, and presently he had a vivid impression that he was in his mother's room, and three women all in black were hidden behind the curtain, and were peering out at him, craning long black necks and showing the whites of eyes that stared unbearably out of black faces. He screamed, and when his father came in, kept repeating something, over and over, about the three black friends behind the curtain, and could not be persuaded that it was a dream. His father stayed with him and soothed him, and presently Michael told him what his aunts had said about the death angel taking away his mother's soul to Purgatory. His father was silent for a moment, then he said:—"Michael, your aunts know no more about it than you do yourself."

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"But they saw the death angel come!" said Michael, his voice soft and hushed with awe.

"They didn't see it—nobody ever does, and nobody knows where it takes people's souls. But I think—when a woman has been as good as your mother was, Michael—that she may surely be taken straight to Heaven." His father's voice was choked with tears.

"Is Heaven a happier place than the world?" asked Michael.

"Ever so much," his father replied decidedly.

Michael lay silently thinking for a long time after that. He could not imagine how Heaven could possibly be a much happier place than the world. He concluded at last that it might be, if the big golden sounds went on all the time there and never stopped. The big golden sounds were the music of his father's harp.

Next morning the house was all darkened, and at breakfast Michael heard the favourite horse whinnying outside the shutters; his place at the table was right in front of the window, and this horse had been accustomed to poke his head in and be fed generously with morsels

## THE GREAT UNKNOWN

from Michael's own breakfast. But nothing happened in the natural way this morning. An aunt with tousled hair and red, tear-swollen face sat in his mother's place, and this sight, together with the general atmosphere of tears, and the darkness of the room, made it impossible for him to eat his breakfast.

It was this same aunt who gave Michael his first pang of real grief. He came into the kitchen and found her there, with his mother's pink apron on. He burst into the first actual tears he had shed, rushed outside, and stood sobbing there. His aunt came out to comfort him, but he ran away from her. He could not bear to be cuddled up to that apron, *now*. He felt as if she had hurt him all through, and he could not bear to be touched by her.

All day he wandered about alone, wet repeatedly by soft bursts of rain and warmed by the fleeting sunshine. The crowds of people in black went away in a procession, his father among them, and Michael thought with relief that this awful blackness had passed off for

## GLORY AND THE DREAM

and, and things would go on in the natural happy way again. But he didn't feel like going back to his accustomed plays just yet; his mind was too full of wonder. The mystery of the death angel filled it. He couldn't help thinking he could have driven the death angel away if he had been there. He would just have fought and fought till it *had* to fly away. That wouldn't be any harder than killing a lion. And yet, all his aunts were there, and they couldn't drive it away—they couldn't even see it.

Then, as the sun was getting low and making the grass look golden, and it was beginning to occur to Michael with all the old delight that he might find a fairy any moment, the black procession came back. The aunt who had worn his mother's apron called him in, and washed him and dressed him in clean, dry clothes, and brought him into the dining room, where all the people in black were assembled. They were done crying now. They ate and ate and ate, till Michael was so tired he thought

## THE GREAT UNKNOWN

he *couldn't* sit still and be good any longer. But every time he kicked and wriggled he was sternly hushed by his aunts. He looked for the three black friends, but could not see them. He wondered if they were still in his mother's room, hiding behind the curtain, waiting for him to come in, that they might crane their awful necks, and peer at him. He wouldn't go, he resolved defiantly.

The chair grew harder and harder, the sight of this solemn continuous eating more intolerable, and he squirmed and fumed in spite of all his aunts' dark looks and whispers. At last his father, who did not go on eating like the rest, sat back in his chair and called to him. Michael ran to him gladly, climbed on his knee and fell asleep in five minutes.

Fortunately there was soon great fun, to bury, though not to efface, the memory of this black time. Michael learned that he and his father were going away across the sea in a ship, to a new country, where they were to live all by themselves. The horse who poked

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

his head in the window was coming with them, also the harp, and a few books, but nothing else.

"I'm so glad we're going away from this house!" cried Michael. "We'll leave the three black friends behind, and they'll crane and crane their necks" (he did his best to illustrate their eerie motion) "and keep peeping out for me, and I won't be here!" Michael's sweet voice was full of glee, mischievous triumph, and he danced for joy.

There were days of fun after that, when all sorts of delightful things were rummaged out of dark corners. There were two great wreaths of paper roses, one white and one red, which Michael went about holding up on a level with his head, imagining that they fitted it, although they were as big as cart-wheels. But they finally had to be burned, although his father felt very bad about doing it. A whole lot of things were burned—things just as curious, as richly suggestive of delightful plays, and many of them as deeply regretted by his father, as these paper wreaths; and men came

## THE GREAT UNKNOWN

and took away waggon loads of other things.

At last the morning came when he and his father took their departure, leaving the three black friends in possession, as Michael firmly believed, in spite of all his father could say. He had to say good-bye to his grandmother and grandfather and all his aunts, and when he was finally released from their kisses and tears and hot smothering embraces, he stood in the fresh windy roadway and pranced till his clean boots and stockings were all splashed with mud, and indulged in shout after shout of joy. He got on to the train with eyes and ears wide open for wonders, but encountered nothing more remarkable than an old couple who were in the compartment he and his father entered. He speedily poured forth to them the story of the three black friends and their consequent departure for a strange country—a tale which his father found it necessary to supplement by an explanation that the three black friends were not actual flesh and blood usurpers. As the old lady, won by the shivery charm of the manner in which he reproduced



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

the looks and ways of those remarkable beings, gave him a huge, gaily striped bull's-eye, he took no further part in the conversation for some time. He received it with an appreciative smile, and the remark:—"Oh, I'm so glad it's a good *hard* one! It'll last," and devoted himself to enjoyment of it for some time to come. When he once more became conversationally inclined, he gave them a description of "the beautiful crowns made of roses," which he "wore for a long time, but father had to burn them. He didn't want to, but he said we couldn't take anything with us, because we might have to build our own house and things would get rained on. Besides, lions might come and steal them. I'm so glad we're going away, where we'll find lions and all sorts of things we can't find at home, but no matter how nice it is, I'm going to come back to Ireland when I'm grown up and be a patriot. Father's a patriot, but he is a kind that doesn't have to fight. Of course he would if he had a chance, but he hasn't had a chance yet. I want to have a chance to fight," said Michael, his

## THE GREAT UNKNOWN

great luminous eyes shining with ardent longing. "I want to kill a whole lot of Saesanaigh, and then get killed myself, because if I'm killed fighting, people won't cry about me, and turn all black and horrid, the way they do when a person just dies."

The old couple expressed their delight at these sentiments in the warmest manner, and showered a hundred thousand blessings on his brave enterprise. This was naturally stimulating to Michael, but as the day wore on even his lively little tongue began to weary. He got hot, and so tired of sitting in this dull close place, with no fun going on. The interest of the old couple began to languish, and presently they fell asleep, and their mouths opened, and they looked ugly and stupid. His father fell asleep, too, after forbidding him to indulge in any more of the bull's-eye. Michael sat holding this one remaining source of pleasure in his hands, his whole little being one ache of longing for another delicious taste; but his sense of honour was strong enough to withstand the temptation. He would not disobey

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

while his father was asleep. The tedium was such an acute pain as only an eager-hearted child, condemned to hours of inaction, can know. If only his father would waken, so that he could ask when they were going to get to the sea, and get on the ship! But his father continued to sleep; and finally awoke, to find Michael asleep against his shoulder.

He had an impression of arriving in a noisy place, full of shouting, and men, and lights, although it wasn't indoors, and asking if they had got to the sea yet. His father said:—"This is Cork, and we'll get on board to-morrow." He was so sleepy he could hardly stand up, but his father held him and made him walk somehow, and they came to a house with stairs in it—something Michael had never been in before. He had to climb the stairs, sleepily conscious that this was being brave, and his father would not let him fall, and he was put to bed at the top of the stairs.

Michael had forgotten all the solemn thoughts he had had lately in the excitement of taking breakfast at a long table full of strange

## THE GREAT UNKNOWN

people next morning, of demanding:—  
“Where are the grandmother and grandfather who gave me the bull’s-eye yesterday?” and of starting off to the ship with his father, when a picture in a shop window caught his eye, and he stopped short, pulling so hard at his father’s hand that he had to stop too.

“Father, there’s a picture of an angel!” he exclaimed in a tone of awe. “Is it the death angel?”

His father stood looking at it long and silently, in such a way that Michael did not repeat his question, for he knew it *was* the death angel. Great and soft, slow and inexorable, it crept up the steps and in at the door. A little boy like himself, only with no clothes on, and with wings, was trying his very best to fight it away—just as *he* had wanted to do. But the death angel, with bowed head, as if it did not want to see the struggles of that little boy, was pushing him back with its hand—not in a way that could hurt at all, but in a way you couldn’t fight against. And the little boy was not even an ordinary little boy—he

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

had wings, so he must be a sort of angel, or fairy, or something like that that could do wonderful things a person couldn't do. But he couldn't keep away the death angel. Michael was as silent and grave, if not as sorrowful, as his father when they finally went on down the street. All the excitement of going to the ship had been momentarily hushed out of him. He understood now, that nobody could ever drive away the death angel.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE NEW COUNTRY

MICHAEL never forgot his sensations when he first saw the ship. He had imagined a dirty, oily sail-boat, delightfully slippery and redolent of fish, like those in which many of his neighbours went out and sometimes got drowned, and he had imagined that he and his father would cross the great ocean all alone in such a craft, and that he would help to sail it—a thing he had always longed so to do! And instead, he saw standing still and majestic at the dock, shining blue and white in a sudden bright burst of sunshine, the grandest thing he had ever beheld in his life. He caught his breath in wonder and awe. It was so big, so still, so beautiful!

“Oh!” he exclaimed to his father. “Is that the ship? Are we going to get on that?”

They went up a long plank and on to the

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

great thing, and Michael stood motionless there, his eyes upturned and dilated, for a long time before he moved or spoke. Then he exclaimed:—"I don't feel any water under it!" That continuous soft, swaying, quivering motion—the greatest charm of the anchored fishing boats into which he had sometimes been allowed to climb—was missing; but after there had been a great deal of noise, and people going about in a hurry and pushing him out of the way as he stood gazing around him, and trunks and bundles slammed down on the deck (the harp, all tied up in sacking, was among them, and the big golden sounds boomed forth as it was set down) the land began to steal away, softly, over the sunlit waters. Michael gazed at it in speechless wonder. It went farther and farther, in that slow, mysterious manner, till at last the dock they had left to get on the ship was barely distinguishable. At last Michael asked his father:—"Why is the land going away from us?"

His father could not convince him, for some time, that it was really the ship that was

## THE NEW COUNTRY

leaving the land behind. When he realized at last that they were moving over the sea, leaving all the old familiar things behind, going forth to meet unknown wonders, he was swallowed up into a trance of pure happiness. He stood leaning against the railing, gazing down at the green quivering waters far below, and did not move or speak for a long time. But he was lively enough after that first day. He soon awakened to the fact that there were a whole lot of other little boys and girls on board to play with, and he lost no time in making their acquaintance. Then, he and his father went down to a dark place at the bottom of the ship, every day, to see poor Fionn, the pet horse. It was so dark, Michael could just barely see the familiar old head reaching out towards him, with its long flexible nose stretched forth for tidbits. It made him very unhappy to see Fionn, and all those other horses, shut up down there. Sometimes he thought about it after he went to bed at night, and burst out crying; sometimes he thought about it when he was in the middle of a par-



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

ticularly nice dinner, and then the dinner didn't seem nice any more, and he couldn't finish it.

After they landed in the new country they had another wearisome journey on the train, but at last they got to a city where they spent a day buying things. Then they got on the train again, and got off at a station with the river on one side, and a great many piles of wood on the other. Fionn was to come on a freight train, but he would not be there till late in the afternoon. Michael and his father went to a place that was full of fine new wag-gons, and his father bought a beauty, painted red and green, over which Michael went wild with delight. Fionn was to be harnessed to it as soon as he came, and they were to drive to their new home, miles up the river. Michael awaited Fionn's arrival with the utmost impatience. He wanted to be sitting beside his father on the high seat of that alluring new vehicle, with its great red wheels. When Fionn was at last unloaded he was very frisky, and pranced all the way to the waggon shop. He stamped and tossed his head all the

## THE NEW COUNTRY

time he was being harnessed, and the man in the shop had to hold him while Michael was being lifted into the seat, and his father climbed in and took the reins. Then Fionn dashed off down the street with them, the empty waggon rumbling in the grandest way, while Michael jumped up and down in the seat with delight at this wild ride. They came once more to the station, and there Michael watched the fascinating process of loading the waggon. The tent they were to live in while they built their house, the harp, the pure B they had got in the city, and, last and not least, a lot of delightful paper bags, full of good things to eat, were loaded in; then they were off along the road beside the river, Michael beaming with joy. They were actually driving in their own new waggon, through the new country, where the next step might land them into the midst of unheard-of wonders. This expectation lent an inexpressible charm to the clear-hued, bright new country. It was new and unknown, consequently wonderful. Everything about it was wonderful, and the

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

life they lived in it could not fail to be wonderful. This was surely enough to fill Michael with a bliss too pure for words to utter, which could only be expressed in his smile.

The sun was setting when they came to a broad green hill. They drove past a little house that nestled at its foot, and up to a great wild slope of unbroken meadow, full of little bushes and long grass and flowers. Here Fionn was stopped, and Michael's father lifted him down, saying:—"This is our land." Michael's first impulse was to race as fast as he could go through that long grass, and he ran uphill till he couldn't run any more, and had to flop down on the ground. Then he started to run downhill, and ran faster and faster till he could hardly stop himself, and then his father's operations became so interesting that he had to devote all his energies to watching them. The pitching of the tent was particularly absorbing, and when it was up Michael thought it the most charming abode any heart could desire. He ran in and out the door, he crawled in and out underneath,

## THE NEW COUNTRY

he rolled about in the sweet fresh grass that was to be their floor. When his father unpacked two cot beds and put them up, he exclaimed:—"Why have we got to sleep in beds? It would be so nice just to make nests for ourselves in the grass!"

But the most joyful time of all was when his father made a fire, and took good things to eat out of those alluring paper bags and cooked them. Michael had been looking and sniffing longingly at those paper bags for some time, and he enjoyed their contents with an intensity that would have caused absolute silence, and grim devotion to business, in another boy; but in him the need for self-expression was even more imperative than hunger, so he was not too busy to exclaim at intervals all through the meal:—"This is the best tea I ever had!" It was so good, that it was the hardest work to spare even the tiniest morsels for Fionn, whose share of good things from Michael's plate was generally so liberal.

He found the new country no less delightful in the succeeding weeks and months than

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

on that first joyful day. There was so much sunshine, that it sometimes made him almost tired being happy. There was the great river to play beside, and when he once got down close to the water he never wanted to go away again. But his father did not like him to go alone, and he never could stay half as long as Michael would have liked. He was always saying:—"Come along now, old man, we must get to work at our house again." Michael never could object very strongly to this. Building the house was such fun. He helped his father a great deal with it. When Fionn was harnessed to a great big turtle, (that was the scraper) which dug out the place for the cellar, Michael took the reins and put one hand on each of the great wooden handles, and drove. There was no such proud delight as this—to feel the warm thrill from that great strong body come down the reins to his hands, and to feel that he had it in his power! Besides this, he did a lot of sawing, and that was hard work, for the saw would wobble and go all crooked. He seized the plane every time his

## THE NEW COUNTRY

father laid it down, tied a string around it, and dragged it all over the place, declaring it was his pet swan. He made a sphynx out of the mortar left over from the chimney. His father had said there was only one sphynx in the world, and Michael was immediately fired with an ambition to make another, and announced triumphantly, when it was completed, that there were *two* sphynxes now! But the glory of this achievement was soon cast into the shade by another, still more helpful to his father and the progress of the new house. When his father began to make fires in the yard and melt tar, he could not keep away from the black, sticky, delightful stuff, and one day his father was short-sighted enough to leave him alone in the yard with a big pot of it for three minutes. A great deal can sometimes happen in three minutes, as Michael's father was fully convinced after that day. He came back to find Michael very happy, very proud of himself, and so gleeful over the impression his personal appearance made on his father, that the latter wondered,

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

for one brief moment, if his character were not in keeping with his present outer hue. Just why this exploit gave him such mad joy at the time, was remembered and caressed and gloated over with such delicious satisfaction, and the marks of it, which wore off with a gratifying slowness, cherished as if they had been the Victoria Cross, would be difficult even for Michael himself to explain. Perhaps if he had not been blessed with a father who had a sense of humour and a tender heart, the experience might not have been so pleasing.

His father was always doing interesting things. One day he took a great big long chain, for which Michael thought the only right use was to catch elephants and chain them up to tame them; but it was merely used for measuring land. Michael felt disappointed that a chain so admirably adapted to a noble use should be thrown away on a piece of work so much less important. There was a fascination about the ploughing and the harrowing and the sowing of seed, and with life so full of interest, it never occurred to Mi-

## THE NEW COUNTRY

Michael to wish that he had some other children to play with. But one morning when he was at work at the sphynx, he was startled by another little boy's voice—a slow and careful voice, as if talking was hard work—that said:—"I sawed you here, and I am glad there is a little boy for me to play with. I have no boy to play with, and I came over here to play with you."

Michael looked up, and saw a little boy just his own size standing looking at him.

"I can't play just now," he replied with dignity. "I'm making a *hiss-phynx*."

The little boy stared at him and the sphynx in silence for a while, and then, concluding that this performance was too bewildering for him to puzzle his matter-of-fact head about, brought the conversation down to the simplest commonplaces by the announcement:—"I am Nieder."

"I'm Michael," was the reply. "Father brought me out to the new country after mother died and the three black friends came to live in the house. It's so nice to live in the



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

new country! Have you seen any lions yet, Nieder?"

"No."

"Have you seen any elephants?"

"No."

"Tell me as soon as you see any, because father has a chain he could catch them with."

"Why do you not go to the circus, if you want lions and elephants to see?"

"Because I want to see wild ones, that I can catch!" cried Michael. "There must be lots around here. Did you always live here?"

"No. My mother and my father bringed me here since spring."

"Did you come from Ireland?"

"No. I comed from Deutschland. Will you be ready soon to play?"

"I haven't finished the *hiss-phynx* yet," said Michael.

"I want to run a race" said Nieder.

The slope of meadow was very inviting, and it was a long time since Michael had had a little boy to race with. "I can finish it after dinner," he said, and darted off, Nieder after

## THE NEW COUNTRY

him. Michael thus had a playmate added to his other new joys; and although Nieder continued to maintain a stolid stupidity on the subjects of sphynxes, lions and elephants, Michael scarcely felt that lack in a boy who was so splendid for races and see-saw and every kind of active play.

## CHAPTER III

### THE REBEL'S HOUSE

ONE day Michael and Nieder were playing in the middle of the road that ran downhill. On the other side of the road there was a fence, and a big field, and away across that field there was a group of trees with a house showing among them.

"I wonder if it gives any little boys and girls in that house," said Nieder, who had not yet learned English idioms. "I would be glad, if it gived many of us."

"I think two of us are enough," said Michael. "If we knew the little boys and girls in that house, perhaps we wouldn't like them. Perhaps we would quarrel with them, and that would spoil our play."

"If we go in there we might find them," said Nieder, ignoring these speculations.

"I don't want to go in there. I want to see

## THE REBEL'S HOUSE

where the road leads to uphill. There's no knowing where it goes! Just think, perhaps we might find lions and elephants!"

"I want to find other little boys and girls. I finded you in *that* place, and we might find other little boys in *that* one," said Nieder, pointing alternately to the two fields on the opposite sides of the road.

Michael had tact enough to reply:—"We might find a house at the top of the hill, with *more* little boys and girls in it than there are in that one. If there were any in that one, we would see them playing in the field."

This seemed to Nieder a reasonable argument, and he followed Michael silently uphill. The road became more enticing and mysterious the farther they went. The dusty part got narrower and narrower, till at last there wasn't any at all, and it became what Michael called "a woods of yellow flowers, bigger than us." They became so thick that the boys could see nothing ahead of them, except gleams of sunshine through the great rank stalks. They might find anything here—any minute! Nie-

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

der broke in on Michael's delicious rapture with the remark:—"This is not a road. We will not find a house here."

"But we might find *anything*," cried Michael, in a tone of such hopeful excitement that Nieder followed on. At last they came to an old gate, with golden-green moss all over the grey bars, and warm with the sunshine. Michael leaned his cheek against it, feeling perfectly happy, and forgetting for the moment that he had wanted to go any farther, but Nieder again recalled him to practical considerations by the remark:—"Here gives it a hole, where a dog gets in and out."

There was a hole under the gate, where the earth was worn quite smooth, and Michael was quick to discover that it was just the right size for him and Nieder to wriggle under. On the other side they found the same wilderness, diversified by monster pigweeds, one of which Michael vainly endeavoured to pull up in order to show Nieder the pretty pink root. Suddenly they found themselves in front of a house. It had a big veranda, all grey and

## THE REBEL'S HOUSE

moss-covered like the gate; a grapevine ran up one post and over a great deal of the floor: the tall yellow flowers almost obscured the sagging steps.

"No little boys and girls live here," said Nieder in a tone of disgust.

"Oh, we'll find *grand* things in here!" cried Michael, running eagerly up the steps. Nieder followed slowly, and turned aside to investigate the grape vine. Michael slipped in the great door, which stood ajar, and then paused, gazing around at the hall, with its smooth, dark floor, its wide, majestic staircase, and the window at the head. He was drinking in the vast silence, and in another moment his imagination would have been hard at work; but Nieder came in, saying:—"The grapes are little and green, and I cannot eat them!"

Just then they heard a sound upstairs, like some one crying. It echoed strangely through the empty rooms.

"I want to go home," Nieder exclaimed suddenly.

"Are you afraid?" demanded Michael, in

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

such a tone that Nieder hastily answered:—"No!" in his roundest manner.

"Then come on," said Michael, and started upstairs. Nieder made a great noise stamping his feet as he followed. This served the double purpose of impressing Michael favourably with his courage, and drowning out his own fears. Nieder always felt better when he was making a noise.

The crying stopped, and suddenly a little girl appeared at the head of the stairs.

"Oh!" she cried rapturously when she saw them. "Where *did* you come from?"

"Home," was Nieder's concise but indefinite reply.

"Do you live all alone here, like a fairy?" cried Michael.

"No, I'm only Susan. I come here when I'm lonely, and I was crying because I have nobody to play with. I have been with my cousins in town all summer; mother was sick, and she's not well enough to be company for me yet. She goes to sleep such a lot! I was so lonely for my cousins, and so I came up

## THE REBEL'S HOUSE

here, and I cried because I have nobody to play with!"

"We'll all play here," said Michael, and went through an open door beside them. It led into a wide bare room, that felt grand and solemn. The sunshine streamed in through the great low window.

"There is a king standing in the middle of this room," Michael said in a soft, hushed voice.

"No," replied Nieder solemnly. "There is no king here."

"But I see his golden crown. Oh, it is such a beautiful golden! Susan, don't you see it?"

"Where is it?" demanded Susan eagerly.

"On his head, of course."

"But where is his head? I can't see it! I'd love to see a golden crown!"

"He is not here," Nieder repeated.

"I want to see that crown! Tell me where it is," begged Susan.

"He is standing in the middle of the room, and his head reaches up as far as the top of that window, so his crown is up there."



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

Susan gazed fixedly, with wide eyes, at the point Michael indicated, but at last she said in a tone of the most sorrowful disappointment:—"I *can't* see it!"

"I want to go into the other rooms," said Michael.

"They're all alike," said Susan. "They're all empty, and they make me so lonely!"

But Michael ran into another room, and suddenly stopped short, exclaiming:—"Oh! There's a beautiful peacock stork!"

"Where? What's a peacock stork?" inquired Susan.

"It's like a peacock" (Michael had been deeply impressed by a peacock in the hold of the ship coming over). "Only it has a white spot in the middle of its back, and instead of having common looking wings, like a grey hen, they're red and golden. He's flying across the room now!"

"Let us play tag," said Nieder.

They had not been long at this game, before Michael discovered a green dog who raced around with them everywhere. This creature

## THE REBEL'S HOUSE

joined in all their plays that day, and even Nieder had to reckon with him, puzzled and ill-pleased as he was by his presence. Michael had found a new joy, and one which was to be his greatest delight for years to come. The empty house had suddenly roused an imagination which had only been awaiting some such stimulus to put forth its full strength. It never was an empty house again. He could scarcely keep away from those bare, echoing, solemn rooms, that were peopled with such bright and delightful beings. He said as soon as he met his two playmates every morning:—"Let us go up to the Rebel's House!" This was what Susan called it. She said her father had told her it once belonged to a measly wretch of a rebel (Michael, with fiery eyes, corrected this epithet. He told her she should say patriot, and patriots were always brave men) but that he had been taken prisoner and all his things were taken away from him, and so the house had been empty ever since.

Susan was always very ready to act on Michael's suggestion of repairing to the Rebel's

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

House, for it fascinated her too—and she always had a hope of being able to see the king's golden crown, or the wonderful peacock stork. The peacock stork's name was Shylince, and he was always flying from one room to another, with Michael in pursuit, coaxing him to come and be fed. Nieder could not endure Shylince. He could tolerate Dukeland, the green dog, for the latter was often the centre of exciting plays, although it did make him cross to have to play with a thing that wasn't there at all. But one day when Michael started on his pursuit of Shylince, he lost his temper completely.

"It gives no Shylince!" he asserted passionately. "No bird is in this house."

"But I'm playing there *is* a Shylince!" protested Michael.

"What for do you play with things that are not here?"

"He *is* here!"

"I will go home, if you play with him!"

Michael yielded for the present, resolving to linger after Nieder and Susan left, and en-

## THE REBEL'S HOUSE

joy Shylince in peace. The sun had gone down when they left; there was a cold, grey light in the room where he stood, looking at Shylince. The latter, who was becoming tame, was standing before him on the floor. He was so distinct, in all his beautiful colours, even to the little white spot on his back. But Nieder's words came back to Michael, making him feel as if he could never like anything again—as if all the sweet familiar joys of his life were hitting him in some tender place and making him want to cry. It would be so sad, so dreadful, if Nieder *should* happen to be right—and there really wasn't any Shylince! But Shylince still stood there, beautiful and bright, and as Michael stood contemplating him those doubts gradually passed away—and never came back, in spite of Nieder's continued denials.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PRISONER IN THE BARN

It was a fall morning. The sky was clean, the ground was clean, and the grey empty air was so inviting, that each of the three playmates was exclaiming, before breakfast was over:—"I want to get out!"

It was just the kind of day on which to carry out a stern purpose, and Michael and Susan and Nieder had decided, the afternoon before, that something very stern had to be done to-day. The fact of the matter was, a wicked man had been hanging about the Rebel's House lately. Dukeland always frightened away anybody who had a loud voice, but unfortunately the wicked man hadn't a loud voice, so Dukeland could not be persuaded to attack him. He always whispered. It wasn't a nice whisper, Michael said—it was a

## THE PRISONER IN THE BARN

dusty whisper. He was convinced that if he could only make this person yell, Dukeland would frighten him away—but no matter what he did, he never could make him yell.

Nieder looked with comparative favour on the wicked man, because he was exciting. Plays with him, as with Dukeland, involved running and shouting, so Nieder was willing to overlook his exasperating lack of substance.

It had never occurred to them to make a prisoner of this objectionable person till the day before, when they had an hospital in the Rebel's House. The hospital consisted of a row of corn-cobs on the old sofa, and a pot of muddy water at one end. This was soup, and after Michael and Nieder, who were the doctors, had given all the patients the same kind of medicine, (it would have looked like red paint to an observer) Susan gave them each a spoonful of soup. Then she covered the pot, and they went home to dinner. Michael stayed behind for a few minutes.

When they came back in the afternoon the soup was gone, nothing being left but a little

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

sand in the bottom of the pot. Only one thing could possibly have happened—the wicked man must have drunk up all that soup!

Michael had a strange impression that he had tipped the pot over after the others had departed, but of course that was only an illusion, like the sun going round the earth, or the trees sticking up into the sky. What had really happened was that the wicked man had come in and stolen the soup.

They were unanimous in their decision that after such an outrageous theft the wicked man must not be allowed to go about loose any longer. They must come to-morrow, whatever happened, and take him prisoner.

Michael promised that he would bring heavy chains, and big iron things to go round his feet, and big iron things to go round his hands.

"Where will you get them?" asked Nieder.

"I'll find them," said Michael.

"Will you be able to see them?" asked Susan.

"I don't know," said Michael. "They'll be so heavy to carry, perhaps I won't."

Naturally the three playmates were eager to

## THE PRISONER IN THE BARN

meet next morning, but Susan's father had to go to town, and her mother was nervous and could not stand being left alone, so Susan, with a doleful face, but a sweet dignity becoming to a martyr, told Michael that the capture of the wicked man must be put off till the afternoon. In the afternoon they all met on the road, and Michael had his arms stretched straight out in front of him.

"I've got the chains on my shoulders," he explained, "and the iron things are on my arms. They're very heavy."

"Will he kick and fight and try to get away like that great big rooster I caught?" inquired Susan.

"You bet," said Nieder, who was learning English expressions fast.

"He won't fight after he gets those on," said Michael.

"Won't he? Wouldn't you fight if any one put things like those on you?" asked Susan.

"No. I'd kill him first."

"Would you kill him if he was a good man and you were a bad man?"



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"I would."

"But if he got them on before you could kill him, wouldn't you fight?"

"No, I wouldn't fight after that."

"Then we will be able to have the procession with him to the barn all right," said Susan.

The hunt for the wicked man was most exciting. Michael, of course, was the one who discovered him. "He's lying on the roof of the root-house," he told the others. "Don't you see him, eating hot biscuits as fast as he can? He must have stolen those. Did your mother bake biscuits this morning, Nieder?"

"She baked some yesterday, but we ate them all," said Nieder.

"Then he must have stolen those from some one living in the woods. I had no idea his mouth was so big. Why, that's almost a whole one he has just put in! Oh, he sees us! You run around behind the root-house, and head him off if he tries to get away, and I'll face him."

There was a fierce struggle, and Michael was the one who fought most strenuously. He

## THE PRISONER IN THE BARN

suddenly threw himself on one knee and looked around at Nieder.

"You get those iron things, Nieder," he said. "He's down now. My knee's on his breadbasket."

"Did you leave them here?" asked Nieder.

"No, they're over there on that pile of stones."

Nieder brought them.

"Susan, come and help Nieder hold him," said Michael. "I'll have to go and find a store, and buy a striped suit to put on him. Prisoners can't have clothes like other people."

"There isn't any store around here," said Nieder.

"I'll find one in the woods," said Michael, and ran off towards the stump fence that separated the woods from the old place.

"If you see any groundhogs under that fence, whistle for me," Nieder called after him.

"Stay where you are," said Michael peremptorily. "I don't care if there are a thousand groundhogs and a million of those duck-

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

bill things, or even if I see a zebra, I won't have you let that man go after the fight we had getting him."

"But Susan could hold him, and she doesn't want groundhogs," said Nieder. Michael made no answer, but ran off, and had wriggled through into the woods before Nieder could represent to him the tedium of holding an imaginary man while there were real groundhogs hiding under the stump fence. He didn't care if it was only the duckbill things and the zebra, but he did want to hunt a groundhog.

"Put those iron things on him," Michael called from the other side of the fence.

Nieder had actually forgotten the iron things, but he made haste to put them on, although it was hard to tell where the culprit's arms and legs were. Michael was back by the time this performance was over.

"I got the suit," he said.

"What does it look like?" asked Susan.

"It is striped grey and white, and it is rather loose, because the man asked what size, and I said I didn't know, but I said the man was

## THE PRISONER IN THE BARN

thin and slouched, and so he gave me a humpy sort of one."

"Will we be able to have the procession now?" asked Susan.

"Yes," said Michael. "Make him go in front of you, Nieder. You go next, Susan, and I'll carry the clothes."

When they got the prisoner to the barn they put the suit on him. It seemed to Susan and Nieder that they were merely making gestures, but Michael was conscious that he was dragging the clothes over limp arms and legs. After that was done they realized it was tea-time, and started home in a great hurry. Susan was the first one to say good night. She climbed the fence and ran home across the fields. Michael and Nieder ran on down the road till Michael came to his father's gate, when he said good night and went in. It was very comfortable to be there, going across the wide bare field to the new house, which had been finished last Saturday. Michael was convinced that there never would be another day so happy as last Saturday. They had

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

spent it gathering up shavings, and they had made the first fire in their fireplace. Michael's only regret was that it could not happen again. Of course Saturday would keep on coming, but Last Saturday was gone, and could only be reclaimed in the useless, tantalising form of a memory. However, it was still interesting and exciting, as well as comfortable, to be coming home to the new log house, and the smoke from the stone chimney convinced him that there would be something good and hot for tea. He started to run—then suddenly remembered the prisoner chained up in the box stall, with nothing to eat, and no fire to warm him. But then, no fire could warm any one so wretched as a prisoner, and it would be far better to eat nothing than to have your food brought to you under such circumstances. For a few minutes Michael's hunger struggled with these reflections. It was so keen that it seemed to him he could scarcely manage to endure it till he got across the field to the house, but all this time the prisoner was too unhappy to be hungry. The sun was going severely

## THE PRISONER IN THE BARN

down out of a grey sky, with barely an attempt at a glow, as if to emphasize this depressing fact.

The tea was warm and delicious, but Michael felt as cold after it as before, for the prisoner was sitting in the box stall with those iron things on him. If it had only been one of themselves who was the prisoner, he could have come home and had his tea, and that would have been the end of it. But instead, the victim was a poor unfortunate imaginary person, and would have to stay there all night. After tea he sat down by the fire to get warmed, but the logs were making a monotonous, joyless sound, as though they had pains somewhere inside of them. That sound seemed to embody the prisoner's state of mind. He got up and began to look around for shavings. They were the most delightful things to find, although he could never discover a good enough use for them, any more than he could for corn silk. There were none to be found now, though; they had all been gathered up and burned. When his father wanted to know how

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

far he could count he snatched eagerly at that distraction, and succeeded in counting up to a hundred. He was conscious that he would have felt very triumphant on any other evening.

He was still cold when he went to bed, although his father got out a quilt for him, with funny pink things on it, which, he decided, must be dogs (they were intended for morning glories). He wondered if Dukeland would have driven away the man before they had taken him prisoner if he had been a pink dog instead of a green one. He wished he had made him do it. But then, Dukeland wouldn't, as long as the man didn't yell, and he never could get the man to yell. He had tried often enough.

The next morning at breakfast Michael left what he particularly enjoyed when he was happy—the top part of the egg with the white in it. He had found out by this time that whatever he particularly enjoyed when he was happy, hurt him particularly when he was unhappy. He put it in his pocket and brought it

## THE PRISONER IN THE BARN

up to the old house as a treat for the invalid corn-cobs. He hoped he would be there before either of the other two, for he must let that prisoner out. He found nobody there, and made straight for the barn. The box stall was dark, but he felt sure he could make out a striped suit in one corner, and remembered that Nieder had said:—"We'll tie him up here, so he can't lie down." He went into the corner and took the iron things off the hands and feet of the prisoner, who sat quite still, and did not stir till Michael was done, and had stepped back. Then he walked straight out and did not look at Michael once. Michael followed him meekly to the door. He wished he had a right to expect him to be grateful for being set free, but he knew he hadn't, after helping to capture him. He suddenly remembered that Susan and Nieder would likely want to catch him again. He might overcome Susan by endowing her hospital with the dainty in his pocket, although he doubted whether that would have much weight with her if Nieder held out the hope of another pro-



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

cession. But his perplexities vanished when he looked at the striped back retreating quickly and quietly through the weedy yard. At that rate the man would be well away from the hillside in ten minutes, and Susan and Nieder might search as hard as they liked; Michael was satisfied they would never find him again.

## CHAPTER V

### "A TUMULTUOUS PRIVACY OF STORM"

THERE came a day when Susan and Michael and Nieder could not meet. It was a blizzard, and the high northwest wind was likely to freeze tender little ears and noses with appalling rapidity, so each of the three playmates was kept indoors. Michael rather enjoyed this; it was like Sunday. Sunday was the one day in the week when his father claimed his companionship, and in some ways Michael found him a much better companion than either Susan or Nieder. The snow thrashed against the paper window panes, the wind howled around the house, while a great fire glowed in the fireplace, which his father had to feed constantly. He also had to chop a plentiful supply of wood, and attend to the horses, but he found time to play a game of tag with Mi-

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

chael before it was time to prepare dinner. When he settled down to sober potato peeling, Michael returned to his village of chips and bark, which was spread out on the stone hearth. A short, stout, light-coloured chip was the Saesanach policeman, and a big wet piece of bark was the jail, under which lay several patriotic citizens who had incurred the displeasure of the policeman. A piece of white birch bark, with two big chips and some little ones under it, represented a home, like Michael's own before his mother died and the three black friends took possession; a piece of grey bark covering a number of grey chips all as much alike as he could get them, was a monastery: little flecks of birch bark sprinkled about everywhere were the fairies. Just as his father had come in and suggested a game of tag, the policeman was getting the worse of a tussle with a remarkably vigorous patriot he had captured.

When Michael returned from the game he found the policeman dead, to his great joy and exultation; the victorious patriot marched to

## A PRIVACY OF STORM

the jail and released the prisoners, and then there was a grand procession of all the villagers, which extended the whole length of the hearth, while the dead policeman lay beside his rifled jail. His father came to the fireplace just then to put the potatoes on the crane, and looked down with astonishment at the row of chips and Michael's intent attitude, his shining eyes fixed upon t' em, and his cheeks a fiery crimson.

"What does this mean, Michael?" he inquired.

"Patrick O'Mahony has killed the policeman!" cried Michael excitedly.

"Who is Patrick O'Mahony?"

"One of the good men the Saesanach policeman was putting in jail. He was too strong for him, and he killed him!"

The ring of exultation in Michael's voice brought a responsive glow into his father's face. "Good Patrick!" he exclaimed heartily.

After dinner Michael got the big natural history book out, and looked at all the pictures, and wondered whether it would be more de-

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

lightful to find a lion in the woods, and kill him before he had a chance to find Susan and Nieder and eat them up, or to find an elephant and tame him and ride on his back in that sort of house thing. If you could only get far enough into the woods, you might encounter any of those wonderful creatures. Or a stork might come and build on your chimney; anyway, if you watched enough, you would be sure to see one flying past on its way to somebody's house with a baby. Nieder had had a stork on his chimney, over in Germany; it had been very useful, for it ate up all the mice and rats. Michael could not extract any more interesting information from him than that, but he was sure there were plenty of wonderful things to find out about storks. He filled in the colours of all the animals from his imagination—the tiger's golden and black, the stork's white feathers and red legs and bill, and the brilliant plumage of some of the other birds. The black and white woodcuts sometimes obtruded themselves and blotted out all this gorgeous colouring, but he could always

## A PRIVACY OF STORM

banish them rapidly and sternly. He was interrupted in this absorbing occupation by a sudden swan of snow that broke in through the window pane. It was delightful to have a bit of the storm burst in—it emphasized the comfort of the house, and it was fun to watch the pane being fixed up again.

When it began to be dark, and the glow of the fire was more comfortable than ever, his father suggested songs. Singing was one of the nice things they did together on Sunday. They went over to the great harp in the corner, whose strings gleamed fitfully in the fire-light, while "the wooden lady with no clothes," as Michael called the sea maiden which formed the frame, was hidden in darkness. His father touched the strings, and the big golden sounds, which made Michael feel suddenly warm inside, and happy in a funny sort of way, as if he was going to cry, began. There were a few of Moore's melodies within the compass of his infant voice; "Erin, the tear and the smile in thine eye" was his favourite. The words had no meaning for him, but their sweetness, and

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

the tender beauty of the melody, filled him with satisfaction to the innermost recesses of his little being. "I wish there was more," he said when he had finished. "I hate stopping."

"Try 'The Last Rose of Summer' now," his father said. So Michael sang it, and then his father sang "The Harp of Tara." Michael did not altogether understand that song either; but when his father sang:

"Thus Freedom now so seldom wakes  
The only throb she gives  
Is when some heart indignant breaks  
To show that still she lives."

he felt as if this was too sad and dreadful to be endured, and something seemed to be swelling in his chest as if it was going to split with angry pain. "Oft in the Stilly Night" followed, and Michael understood that song. The words,

"When I remember all  
The friends, so linked together,  
I've seen around me fall  
Like leaves in wintry weather,  
I feel like one

## A PRIVACY OF STORM

Who treads alone  
Some banquet hall deserted,  
Whose lights are fled  
Whose garlands dead  
And all but he departed."

seemed to reveal to him with sudden, inexorable clearness the hitherto unreal, grown up future. He tasted the sorrow and loneliness of age, knew it lay before him and could not be avoided. If he had ever thought of his manhood before, it had only been in a vague and futile attempt to picture himself with long legs in trousers, when he had no better occupation for his thoughts. Now he realized himself as an old man—Susan and Nieder gone, even his precious father gone—felt the vain, sick pang of desolation. Fortunately the mirage, if clear, was brief; Brian Boroinhe's march speedily banished it. Then there was the delight of making toast for tea by that great, glowing fire, and getting it just the right golden brown. Michael liked all his colours just right. The smell of the toast, the cosiness of the table by the fire, the pleasure of his



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

father's companionship, were joys so potent that all the energy of his nature was required to appreciate them. Then, after tea, his father sat down and told him stories, in their own whispering, swishing, eerie tongue, that throbbed like a heart quivering under the close pressure of surrounding mysteries. They were stories of fairies and wonders, and Michael drank them in thirstily, eagerly. The love of the wonderful was in his blood, beat hotly in every vein in his body, and his father fed and fostered it. When bedtime came he was wrapped up and tucked in with especial care. "It's Canadian weather we are going to have now, son of my heart," said his father, and the tone he used sent a shiver of joy through Michael. Canadian weather was evidently something ominous—but it was also something new, untried, and Michael was ready to meet it with delight.

## CHAPTER VI

### NIEDER'S MOTHER

NEXT morning Michael was eager to go out, although his father came stamping in with hunched shoulders and a stiff, red face, indicative of anything but enjoyment; he stamped up to the fire, spread out his hands over it and exclaimed:—"I never dreamed of such weather!"

"I want to go out," said Michael, eagerly seizing his over-socks and beginning to pull them on.

"Well, Michael, I suppose you'll have to get hardened to this, but—" his father gave him a long and doubtful look.

"I want to see what it's like," said Michael.

"You'll see, as soon as you get your nose outside the door," was the grim reply.

Michael had never been so muffled up in all his life as he was this morning. Only a pair

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

of great, limpid grey eyes, a nose and a rosy hint of cheeks hidden somewhere in an enveloping shawl were visible as he ran out.

It certainly was different from anything he had ever known before. Everything was so white, so bright, so still, he hardly recognised the familiar scene. There was so *much* snow. Why, as he ran along the path to the gate, he could just see over the top of it. There was something very queer in the air. He had so many clothes on that he had not supposed he would feel cold, but by the time he reached the gate he felt something getting through at his fingers, although he had his father's mitts on over his own. Then he felt it getting through at his feet.

Susan's gate was just opposite his, and a path had been ploughed between them. Susan was standing on the path, and had just discovered the woful fact that it ended at their gates. "Oh, Michael!" she cried. "We can't get up to the Rebel's House! The road doesn't go on; I tried to get through the snow, and I went down and down till I thought I

## NIEDER'S MOTHER

was going to be drowned. See, I'm all snow away up past my waist."

"And Dukeland had nothing to eat all day yesterday! We've got to give him his breakfast," said Michael, in dismay.

"And I wanted to have school up there to-day. Mother told me all about school—" Susan saw it was useless to continue, for Michael was shouting: "Dukeland! Dukeland! Dukeland!"

"Oh, he's coming!" he said at last, in a tone of relief. "He is so green on the snow! He's coming like a streak, he must be awfully hungry. Here, Dukeland!" Michael shook off his father's mitt, at which Susan burst out laughing, put his hand in his pocket, drew out an imaginary slice of bread, and held it for Dukeland to eat. He was glad Dukeland was hungry and gobbled the bread, for he could not have stood having his father's mitt off long. "My hands hurt!" he said as he picked it up again.

"Come into the henhouse and warm them on my banty hen," said Susan.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

As they made their way to Susan's henhouse Michael became aware that his feet hurt too. When they came in, the banty hen was sitting on a nest. "Put your hand under her wing," said Susan.

Michael pulled off both mitts, and thought his hand a funny colour. He went up to the banty hen, but just as he was going to put his hand under her wing she flew off cackling. She was used to Susan's hand, but not to Michael's.

"Come into the stable and we'll try the cow," said Susan.

The cow was lying down, and she let the children snuggle up to her, one on each side, and warm their hands in her hair. It was very comfortable for Michael's hands, but his feet hurt worse than ever.

Presently Susan's father came in with a pitchfork. "Susan!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing there? Get up out of that at once, and don't ever let me find such a thing again!"

"Michael's hands were cold, and I brought

## NIEDER'S MOTHER

him in to warm them on the banty hen, but she flew away, so I brought him in here," Susan explained.

"Michael! Where's Michael? I don't see him."

"I'm on the other side," said Michael, rising, and regarding Susan's father with interest. He stood up so straight, Michael thought he must have been a soldier once, and from his way of talking he thought he must be used to killing people. "He isn't as nice as my father," was his prompt conclusion, after a moment's earnest scrutiny.

"So you're the wonderful Michael!" said Susan's father.

"I'm not wonderful," said Michael, raising a pair of gravely regretful eyes. "I have never killed a lion, or done anything."

"Never done anything? You ought to be ashamed of yourself! When I was your age I did all the milkin', and there were seven or eight cows too. I was too busy to use them for warmin' pans. I had enough to do to keep me warm! If I had done nothing but sit

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

curled up beside the cow like the stable kitten, my father wouldn't have thought me worth my board, and he would have put me in a bag and carried me off to the woods and lost me!"

Michael began to think Susan came of a savage stock. "I make toast for tea," he urged in self-defence.

"Oh, do you? What a help you must be to your father! I suppose that leaves him nothing to do but sit and read his paper."

"No, he does lots of other things. He attends to the horses and keeps the fire going and cooks the dinner."

"And you just make the toast, do you? What a useful boy you are!"

Michael had never before come across the kind of person whose only notion of making himself agreeable to children is to tease them, and watch the look that comes over their grave innocent faces as if it were the biggest joke in the world. Susan knew how this was meant, and was laughing, and Michael thought she was laughing at him. He suddenly flew into a passion and dashed out of the stable, fight-

## NIEDER'S MOTHER

ing back angry sobs, and forgetting both his own mitts and his father's. Susan ran after him with them.

"Michael, here are your four mitts," she called, still laughing.

Michael glared at her.

"I'm never coming to see you any more. I'm never going to speak to you any more!" he cried. He flung the mitts down and stamped on them, then took one of his own and tore it in his teeth.

Susan had often had quarrels with Nieder, but *he* had never behaved like this. She was terrified, and changed from laughter to tears. "Why are you so angry with me?" she sobbed. "I brought you in—to warm y-you—on—the cow!"

"You laughed at me. Your father scolded me for not working, and I don't see why he should bother about whether I work or not. He said my father only read his paper, and my father does lots of things!"

"Why, Michael, he was only teasing, and I was laughing at him."



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"At *him!*" There was something unheard of and monstrous to Michael in the idea of laughing at one's father.

"I mean—at his fun. It was only for fun—he talks to me like that—all the time!"

"My father never talks like that," said Michael.

Just then Susan's father came out. "What's all this about? Michael, are you a born fool to stand out there with no mitts on? Susan, what are you crying about?"

"Susan's father, I didn't understand that you were teasing. My father has a nice way of teasing that makes you know he doesn't mean it. I got mad," explained Michael.

Susan's father burst out laughing. "Evidently you did, or you wouldn't stand outside on a zero morning in your bare hands. Susan, you get your sled and take him sliding downhill. That will warm him up better than cows."

At the mention of sliding downhill Michael's mood underwent one of its many lightning changes, and anger was banished by eager

## NIEDER'S MOTHER

joy. Once or twice before, when there was an unusual snowfall in the environs of Claddagh, he had known the rapture of sliding downhill. The glory of this prospect could not be dimmed even by the painful fact that his hands hurt worse than ever, and his feet felt as if the toes had ceased to belong to them. He put on his mitts and ran after Susan to the upper part of the barn, from which she produced two sleds, for she was the only child of prosperous parents, and was in the consequent state of affluence. They went out on the road, and slid all the way down the hill to the shore of the river, where they were abruptly pitched forward into a snow bank, just opposite Nieder's gate. They rolled about, kicking and scuffling and laughing till they were almost too helpless to get up, but when they finally did so, Michael once more became sharply aware of the condition of his hands and feet. He had taken off his father's mitts so that he could handle the sled, and he now had cause to bitterly regret the mitt he had torn in his teeth. They stood looking at Nieder's house.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

It was a little green house, and looked very pretty with snow on the roof. "If I didn't know it was just Nieder live, in that house, I would think it was fairy people," said Michael. It was impossible to connect any glamour of romance with Nieder, even though he had once had a stork's nest on his chimney.

"Let's go in and get him," said Susan.

They went up to the door of the fairy-like green house and rang the bell. Nieder's mother came to the door. "Susan!" she exclaimed. "Is it you, out on such a morning?"

"Yes, Michael and I are sliding downhill, and we came to get Nieder."

"Nieder cannot go out on such a morning. So this is Michael? Child, what for do you cry?"

"I am not crying," said Michael, making a brave effort to speak in a normal tone. "But my hands hurt, and my toes don't belong to my feet any more."

"You poor little man!" exclaimed Nieder's mother. "It is not right for so small child to be out in such cold. Come in and become

## NIEDER'S MOTHER

warmed, rather than you should take Nieder out to become freezed."

Michael lost no time in obeying, but Susan followed him reluctantly. "I'm not cold," she said. "He has been cold all morning. I warmed him on the cow, and then I thought he and Nieder and I could slide downhill. I want to slide downhill!"

"Michael must be warmed first," said Nieder's mother with great decision. She led him into a sunny little room, where Nieder's father sat close up to the stove, and Nieder was bending over a picture book. She said something to them, in words that were neither Irish nor English. They sounded something like pigeons talking, and something like geese. Nieder's father glanced at the children, grunted, and went on with his smoking. Susan went over beside Nieder to look at the picture book, and Nieder's mother set Michael down on a chair and undid his manifold wrappings, smiling at the clumsy ingenuity with which they were fastened. "Some time I hope to find a little boy, but yet I can only find shawls and

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

mufflers," she said. But finally she got them all undone, and disclosed a beautiful little face (beautiful in spite of a blue complexion) with the clear brow sternly knitted, the lips, fine and strong in spite of their baby softness, drawn and rigid in piteous endurance, and tears filling the lovely eyes. She took off his mitts next, and on seeing his hands, exclaimed:—"Ach, du armes Kind!" Then added:—"You are frostbitten where your mitt was torn. Susan, run out at once and get a dish of snow!"

"Did Jack Frost bite me, and I never saw him?" exclaimed Michael.

"He did indeed, he bit your poor hand."

"It must have been when I was mad, and I never saw him! I want to see a fairy. I would rather it was a beautiful fairy, but Jack Frost would do."

"You silly!" exclaimed Susan. "Jack Frost only belongs in pictures, he isn't real."

"But he bit my hand," Michael replied.

Nieder's mother laughed. She was by this time rubbing the hand with snow, which seemed

## NIEDER'S MOTHER

to Michael very funny. "Wait till he bites *your* hand," she said to Susan, "and see if you will say he is not real!"

As the hurt went out of Michael's hands, it was gradually borne in on him that he liked Nieder's mother. He loved her to talk. He had forgotten what a nice way mothers had of talking. She had a queer way of saying every word carefully, and when she said words that ended in *r* she seemed to make them long, and they sounded big and black. But that wasn't the part of her talking that was nice, that was only queer. The nice part was the mother part. There was no way of saying what it was like, but he wanted to hear more and more of it.

"You don't always talk English," he said. "What did you talk when you took my mitts off?"

"That was Deutsch. That is our speech," she replied.

"Is that what people talk in Germany?"

"Yes."

"We talk Irish. I wish people did it in

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

Canada. I don't like English words, except three or four nice ones."

"Are the Irish words more nice?"

"Yes, the Irish words are all different colours. There are some of them that jump, and some of them that fly, and some of them are always standing in the sun."

"I have outdrawn the frost!" exclaimed Nieder's mother joyfully. "Now I will see in what way your foots find themselves."

"I think my toes are beginning to join on again," said Michael, somewhat doubtfully.

Nieder's mother took off his shoes and stockings, and then she rubbed his feet—not in snow this time, but in her big warm hands. When Michael regained the use of his toes he did not leave them in idleness long; he used them to grab Nieder's mother's fingers with, and as they were remarkably active and muscular little toes, they could grab hard. A wild gleam of mischief came into his eyes as she pretended to be dismayed, and cried out: "*Ach*!" every time she was caught. At last she put his shoes

## NIEDER'S MOTHER

and stockings on again, after much laughing resistance from him, declaring:—"Now those bad toes will have to be good!"

"My feet feel nice now," said Michael. "They feel like two nice warm biscuits."

"Well then, can he come out and slide downhill with me?" demanded Susan.

"First I must that mitt mend, or nis hand will become again freezed," replied Nieder's mother. She was taking up the mitt, when they heard steps on the verandah.

"My father is coming!" cried Michael.

Nieder's mother ran to the door. By subsequent observation, Michael discovered that she always ran to do anything that had to be done for a man, and she never said anything when a man was in the room. He heard his father say:—"Excuse this intrusion, but I have lost my little boy, and there are two sleds at the foot of the hill here. Have you seen him?"

"I'm here!" cried Michael, and ran out into the hall.

"Come in, if you please, *mein Herr*," said



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

Nieder's mother. "The frost bit his hand through that torn mitt, which I suppose you know not how to mend—"

"I tore it myself, after I went out," said Michael, eager to exonerate his father.

"Let me see your hand," the latter exclaimed. He examined it anxiously.

"It's all right now," said Michael. "Nieder's mother cured the bite with snow. But Jack Frost bit my hand without my seeing him!" he added wofully.

"I can't tell you how grateful I am," said Michael's father. "How did you come to bring him in?"

"That Susan, who is as hard to cold as one of those small beasts that run up trees and chirp, came with him to get Nieder to come out and be freezed, and your child had his eyes in tears, yet he would not cry, and I learned that his feet and hands were in pain from cold, so I bringed him in."

After that, Nieder's father talked to Michael's father for a long, long time, and Nieder's mother sat without saying anything, as

## NIEDER'S MOTHER

if she were a little girl. Nieder showed Michael his picture book. There was a picture of a toucan, with a beautiful golden breast, and Michael made up his mind that some day he would catch a toucan and keep it for a pet. Its golden breast would be so bright they would see it even at night, in the dark. Then they went into the dining room, and played trains with the chairs till Nieder's mother had to reclaim them for use at dinner. It was a delicious dinner; there was a pudding that Michael remembered for days and days. He always remembered it particularly when he awoke in the morning—a time when he remembered nice words and nice smells. He enjoyed having dinner off a different kind of dishes. Their own dishes were big and white and nearly all the same, like English words. There was one with a cover he called the courage dish, because it was like an English word that was different from the others. But *these* dishes were blue and golden around the edge, and there was a jug that was just the colour of the sky, and a yellow butter dish that was like

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

a person, because it had ears, and talked when it was passed with the cover on. There were a lot of little butter dishes too, with edges that made them look like stars, and yellow flowers in the middle. It suddenly struck Michael that the big butter dish was a mother, and the little butter dishes were her children, and they were brothers and sisters, and they were all very, very happy. He liked eating his butter, because the more he ate the more of the yellow flower he saw. When dinner was over, Susan suddenly announced:—"Bless us, I must get home! Mother will have dinner ready for me, and think I'm lost!" as if that appalling thought had only that moment occurred to her. As a matter of fact, she had known perfectly well it was time to go home, when she smelled the dinner cooking, but it smelled like a better dinner than she would get at home, so she stayed, and said nothing about her anxious mother till the cauliflower with white sauce (a delicacy in which she was not allowed to indulge at home) and the delicious pudding had been safely disposed of. Now, however, she

## NIEDER'S MOTHER

wore an expression of solemn dismay as Nieder's mother was putting on her things, and exhorted her to "please hurry up, because mother will be anxious!" and ran down the steps like an innocent, dutiful child, intent only on relieving her mother's mind as speedily as possible.

Michael found things dull after she was gone. Nieder was taken away to have his afternoon sleep, and Michael was generally put to bed for an hour in the afternoon, also, if he happened to be anywhere within reach of his father. But to-day, Nieder's father went on and on, talking to his father, till Michael began to think he must have been going on for about a hundred hours, or perhaps longer, for he knew there were bigger numbers. He began to get very tired of not talking, and he wondered why Nieder's mother did not talk either. He thought there were only two nice things about growing up—one was that you might be a patriot, and the other was that you could talk all you wanted to; yet Nieder's mother was not availing herself of the latter



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## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

privilege. He sat down beside her on a little stool, and presently his head was down on her knee and he was asleep.

He was awakened by his father saying, very gently:—"Come along, small man, we must go home." He opened his eyes, and turned his head round to look up. What was that comfortable thing it was resting on? It was a mother's knee!

The big warm hand that had rubbed his feet slipped under his cheek, so softly, and raised up his face, and a voice breathed as if to itself:—"Ach, die wunderschöne Augen!"

Michael's eyes were "wonder-beautiful," and they were especially so in the soft bewilderment of waking. Any one who knew him could read all the bright imaginings that went on behind them, and shone through their transparent grey, but to strangers, and to some friends who thought they knew him very well, they were a mystery. All such people knew about them was that they had a beauty beyond the usual limpid innocence of a child's eyes, and it was a beauty that would have made one

## NIEDER'S MOTHER

feel a little shivery, were it not for the healthy gleams of mischief that came into them so often.

Perhaps what Nieder's mother did, when Michael was all wrapped up and ready to go home, was not a wise thing to do to a boy who must get on without a mother, but she did it because, not being only Nieder's mother, but a mother altogether, she could not help it. She had been kneeling down to fix the shawl that hid him, all but his eyes and nose, when she suddenly threw her arms around him, and in some way reached her mouth in under the shawl and kissed his cheek. Subsequently Michael often puzzled over how she had done it, but not at that moment; he only put his arms around her neck and hugged her tight. It was beautiful, beautiful, to have his arms around a mother's neck, and when he let go he had a sharp feeling inside that hurt him all through, and he felt the tears coming. It had made him remember the time, long ago, when he used to put his arms around a mother's neck every night at bedtime, and after that, she



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

always gave him a piece of barley sugar to suck till he went to sleep. But the wild, wonderful excitement of coming to the new country and helping to build the log house, and the joy he got from his imaginary creatures, had banished all thought of that time, and he had completely forgotten what it was like to have a mother, till he put his arms around Nieder's mother's neck. Then he felt that a mother was something you *couldn't* do without; that he couldn't stand not having one of his very own. The sharp feeling inside hurt as nothing had ever hurt since the morning he found a tousled red-eyed aunt in his mother's pink apron. He held on tight to his father's hand all the way home, and kept his face turned away to hide the tears he was mastering resolutely. He said to himself, over and over:—"I'm *quite* satisfied with father!" and was determined not to let him think otherwise. But when they came in, and his father began to unwrap him, he exclaimed:—"Michael! What's the matter?"

Then Michael could keep back the sobs no

## NIEDER'S MOTHER

longer, and at last, after being pressed to explain, he said:—"It was only Nieder's mother!"

His father took him up on his knee without a word, and in an instant a pair of eager little arms were close around his neck, and although it flashed through Michael that this wasn't a mother's neck, he hugged him tight, because whatever happened he did not want to hurt his father's feelings—his dear, precious father, who was always so good to him—with whom he had better times even than with Susan and Nieder. "Father, I'm *quite* satisfied with you!" he sobbed.

Then, somehow, although his father said very little, Michael knew he understood it all; but his feelings were not hurt, although he was feeling very sorry about something.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FAIRY ROAD

THE next day Michael was given clear and decided instructions not to stand still a moment, and to come straight home if his hands and feet hurt. He and Susan spent a morning of pure delight, sliding downhill, and for days, Michael thought (it was really only two or three) this joy absorbed them so completely, they could scarcely think of another thing. They forgot all about the Rebel's House, and Michael even forgot Dukeland and Shylince. In fact, they were behaving very like some silly big people who don't know any better, and letting one rather stupid amusement absorb the whole of their naturally active and versatile little minds.

Meanwhile Nieder was having a dull and lonely time of it, and he began to fret. He

## THE FAIRY ROAD

did not fret in the decided, turbulent way in which Susan or Michael would have fretted—he could not be said to be naughty—yet he certainly did make himself very tiresome. He could not amuse himself alone. Susan could if she had to, though she did not like to have to, and Michael thoroughly enjoyed what he called his “happy by myself times,” when he would be quiet for hours, absorbed in a village made of chips, or in pictures in books he got from the shelves, or simply thinking. There were so many wonderful things to think about. But Nieder had none of those resources. Sometimes he rode furiously on his rocking horse, lashing it with his whip, sometimes he stamped about blowing his tin trumpet or beating his drum, but when these amusements palled he could invent no others, and he wandered about the house, asking when it would be dinner-time, and in the afternoon, when it would be tea-time? Or else he stood at the window, looking out at two little red figures that sped past the gate on sleds, and then ran back uphill again, or stayed awhile to tumble each other about in

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

the snow. After a couple of days of this, his mother could stand it no longer, so she wrapped him up well and sent him out. He dashed down to the gate, and looked eagerly about for Susan and Michael, but instead of coming downhill towards him on sleds, as he expected, they were running, and to his great disappointment they had no sleds with them.

"Oh, Nieder!" panted Susan, as she dashed up, and leaned against the gatepost for support. "I was so glad when I saw you, because, what do you think, there's a path up to the Rebel's House this morning, and I can have school up there, but I need you for that, because I can't have school made of just Michael!"

"It's a fairy path!" cried Michael. "It can't have been anybody but fairies made it, because none of our fathers would want to get to the Rebel's House!"

"Stuff!" said Susan. "You talk about fairies as if they were real, like us, instead of just story things!"

"But of course fairies are real!" protested

## THE FAIRY ROAD

Michael. "They're not a bit like us, but they're real the way angels are, only of course they're nothing like angels. I'm going to see a fairy some day. I'm going to watch and watch till I see it, and perhaps I'll even make friends with it."

"People don't see fairies," said Nieder.

"Lots of people I used to know saw them. A lot of my aunts saw them!" said Michael, with awed solemnity. "But it was such a funny thing, afterward they were just like ordinary people all the same. I'm sure if I once saw a fairy, I'd never get over it!"

"I thought you were going to slide downhill," said Nieder. "I have seen you slide downhill every day when mother would not let me go out, and now you do not do it."

"Perhaps we will after awhile," said Michael. "But we *must* go up the fairy road to the Rebel's House!"

"And we must have school when we get there," said Susan.

"I don't want school. I want to slide downhill," said Nieder.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"Here's where the fairy path begins," said Michael, as they passed his gate and Susan's.

"How could fairies plough a path?" demanded Susan, scornfully.

"Oh, I don't know how—but they've done it. Look at those beautiful little stars all over the snow. They have something to do with fairies."

"Those sparkling things? Oh, they're just natural history."

"Natural history is animals," said Michael.

"It's animals too of course, but it's stones, and snowflakes, and—and—all those things," was Susan's clear and satisfactory definition.

"I'm sure those stars have something to do with fairies," Michael repeated. "Anyway the fairies made this path, because no one else would do it."

"Santa Claus might have," said Nieder, slowly and doubtfully. "But I *thought* he only brought things at Christmas."

"You're very silly boys," said Susan. "One of our fathers did it for a surprise, or

## THE FAIRY ROAD

else it was that old Colquhoun. He is always doing queer things."

"You just ask your father, Susan. Nieder, you ask yours, and I'll ask mine. I'm sure it wasn't them."

"Then it was old Colquhoun," said Susan.

"I'll ask him too," said Michael.

All this argument could not take away from the wonder of actually walking up a path to the Rebel's House that had been dug by fairies. Every step was a rarefied joy such as Michael could never remember feeling before, many and vivid as his joys had been. It was almost as wonderful as seeing a fairy to be on the road they had made. His heart had always been so hungry for wonders; now it was tasting delicious satisfaction. He felt as if something was shining inside of him, he was so happy. They went up the steps and pushed open the big door with the lion's head on it, that never shut quite tight, and was now heavier and stiffer than ever before, having been several days untouched. They went into the great bare room with the sun shining on the floor.



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

Susan made Michael and Nieder sit down side by side on the window sill, and she mounted an old soap box in front of them.

"Now school will begin," she said. "Geography first. Ireland and Germany are on one side of the sea, and Canada is on the other side. Then there's the North Pole, where it's always as cold as it is here just now, and the river we live beside."

"There's a country called the Americans on the other side of the river," said Michael.

"There's a country called Spain besides," said Nieder.

"That's a nice name," said Michael. "It's like the big golden sounds all mixed up with honey."

"Arithmetic next," continued Susan with dignity. "Two fives make ten, and twelve are a dozen."

"And six are half a dozen, and ten tens are a hundred, and there are millions and billions and trillions besides," supplemented Michael.

"You must always hold up your hand before you say anything. Grammar next. It

## THE FAIRY ROAD

isn't grammar to talk about sealawags, though father does it sometimes. Natural history next. Lions and tigers don't live here—"

"Oh, Susan—" Michael began.

"I'm teacher," she corrected.

"Teacher," he said, with a little giggle at that title in the midst of his consternation, "are you sure?"

"Of course I'm sure. I wouldn't teach you anything I'm not sure of."

"I wanted to find a lion in the woods and kill him!"

"Well, bears live here. Perhaps you'll find a bear. Minks live here too, and an animal with a smell it isn't grammar to talk about. Fairies don't live here—"

"They do!" protested Michael hotly.

"If you contradict the teacher, mother says you have to be punished. Go and stay in the corner over there."

"It's too cold."

"Then say you're sorry."

"I'm sorry, but they do live here, and they made a road so you could have school up here."

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"Is school nearly done?" asked Nieder.

"Well, I believe that's all," said Susan regretfully. "I can't remember anything else mother told me was taught in school."

"Then can we slide downhill?" demanded Nieder.

Michael was reluctant to leave the Rebel's House so soon, and on this particular morning too, when it was invested with a double glamour; but for a little mortal with such very intense desires as he had, he was pretty good-natured about giving 'em up when anybody else wanted something else very badly, so they all went out, and had the wildest morning of sliding downhill they had had yet; for there were three of them instead of two, which increased the noise and fun, and they had the whole height of the hillside to slide down, and they never knew where they were going to land next, or with just what force they were going to be precipitated into the deep snowdrift beside the river. When the big dinner gong sounded (this was an institution Michael's father had started, to save endless trouble about

## THE FAIRY ROAD

unpunctuality at mealtimes) and there was a general scramble out of that drift and homewards, Michael reminded the other two to remember to ask their fathers if they had ploughed the path. He asked *his* father first thing when he burst in the door, all covered with snow, his cheeks crimson and his eyes shining. "There's a fairy road up to the Rebel's House this morning!" he cried. "I *know* it was fairies made it, but just because Susan and Nieder thought it wasn't I told them to be sure to ask their fathers if they ploughed it, and I'd ask you."

"I certainly didn't," his father replied, looking astonished.

"Then it *was* fairies!" cried Michael, dancing wildly about. "I'm sure it *wasn't* Susan's father, and I'm *quite* sure it wasn't Nieder's," as he remembered the fat figure tilted back in a chair in front of the stove, talking and talking and talking.

He ate his dinner very silently that day. He was full of delightful excitement, not only about the fairy road (although that was ex-

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

citing enough, for now his one little flickering doubt was extinguished; he had thought it *might* be his father) but about the big, bold, adventurous thing he must do right after dinner, in order to convince Susan. He must go and ask old Colquhoun. Old Colquhoun's premises were as yet undiscovered country: they had all the fascination of the unknown. Not that he expected them to be extraordinary in any way. He could not, very well, as for him there was no ordinary. Perhaps big people, if they hark back far enough, can understand the fascination woodpiles, rubbish heaps, barns and woodsheds had for Michael. The chips and blocks he found in such places positively insisted on being people, and houses and villages; scarcely less delightful were the numberless, curious, inexplicable, suggestive objects for which he could find no especial use. Sometimes they suggested, wordlessly but with the utmost poignancy, grim tragedies—sometimes they brought the brightest, most blissful thoughts. To Michael, at six years old, no object was without significance. What a fer-

## THE FAIRY ROAD

tile field he had already found his father's rubbish heap! Thence had been transported a number of tin cans, old bottomless rusty dippers, superannuated saucepans, and leaky coffee pots, to a certain room in the Rebel's House, hereafter known as the aviary, inhabited by a choice collection of birds of Paradise, cockatoos, paroquets, and owls. Only the coveted toucan with its wonderful golden breast was missing; it had not yet found a sufficiently worthy representative. Susan's rubbish heap was of a different, but equally suggestive character. The possibilities of Nieder's back yard had also been partially discovered; but nothing whatever was known about old Colquhoun's premises. Old Colquhoun himself was of secondary importance. His usefulness would be terminated as soon as he denied having ploughed the path.

He had a big, heavy gate—so heavy that Michael had a long struggle to get it open; he thought several times that he would *have* to give up trying, but he was determined he would not if he could possibly help it; and at last,

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

after many gigantic efforts, he got it just enough open to wriggle through, and then he danced and yelled in triumphant joy. Suddenly there was a noise of barking that drowned out every other sound, and a lot of great big dogs flew at him from all sides, their necks bristling in a way he thought was grand; they were almost as good as lions! There must be a hundred of them, he thought, but he did not know what it was to feel frightened, so he went straight on up the path to old Colquhoun's door. Old Colquhoun was there by the time he reached it, calling the dogs, who surrounded him, crouching before him, and curling themselves around his feet.

"Good day, old Colquhoun," said Michael. "Did you plough that path up to the Rebel's House?"

He noticed that old Colquhoun had a long beard, and wore an apron—two funny things, which he had never seen before. He had thought it was only mothers who wore aprons, and he was not accustomed to men with beards.

He did not reply to Michael's question im-

## THE FAIRY ROAD

mediately; then he ejaculated, with a most astounding volume of voice:—"Losh behears!"

"Did you plough it?" Michael repeated.

"Do ye think I ha'e naething else to do, than fash masel' ploughin' paths for weans?" old Colquhoun demanded. "Is that a' ye ca:n' here to ask me? Ma cakes will be burned black," and he turned round and hurried back into the house. Michael followed him. He had not understood this, and wondered what new language it was that had a little English in it and yet wasn't English. From the tone, though, he had no doubt it was a highly indignant denial, and that rejoiced his heart. He had already decided that he liked old Colquhoun. Although his voice was so big and angry, it was soft, and had a nice sound in it. People's voices were generally what decided Michael as to whether he liked them or not.

"I really knew you didn't,—" he began as he followed old Colquhoun through the house.

"Then why did ye come fashin' me aboot it?" demanded old Colquhoun, turning round on him.



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"Susan and Nieder wouldn't believe it was fairies, but I knew there was nobody else would have done it, so I told them to ask their fathers, and I'd ask mine, and then they said it was you, so I said I'd ask you too. *Now* they'll know it couldn't have been any one but fairies!"

Old Colquhoun looked hard at Michael for a few minutes, without saying anything more. Michael thought he meant something by looking at him that way, but he did not know or care what it was, he was so triumphant and happy about the path.

"Wha but fairies would do it?" demanded old Colquhoun at last, in a short, impatient tone, as if any other theory was too silly to be considered for a moment.

He hurried on to the kitchen, which was full of an entrancing smell of cakes. On the table was a pile of them, the perfect golden brown that Michael loved, and a dog was standing with his forepaws on the table, his nose rapidly approaching the tempting heap. Old Colquhoun ejaculated:—"Colin!" in a tone that made

## THE FAIRY ROAD

Michael jump, and brought the dog down to the floor at his feet, crouching and quivering. "Ye would *steal*, would ye? Weel, ye would ha'e had your share if ye had been honest. Noo ye'll see Jessie get twa cakes, bit by bit, and ye'll look on." Michael thought if his father spoke to him in such a tone he would be so ashamed he would never get over it all his life.

Old Colquhoun whipped another pan of cakes out of the oven, then picked up two of the fluffiest and most golden ones in the first heap, and crossed the room to a dog who was lying in a corner with puppies around her. Just at the same moment, Michael caught sight of the puppies; he bounded across the room with a cry of joy, and just had his hand on the softest and wriggliest one, that sent shivers of delight all through him, when he heard a savage growl, and next thing he knew he had been jerked by his collar into the middle of the floor, and old Colquhoun was standing over him panting with excitement.

"Ha'e ye nae sense?" he demanded. "Ye daurna touch a puppy o' Jessie's. Mon, she

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

nearly bit ye! I wouldna for onything ha'e ma auld Jessie get into trouble. She's a gey canny auld lassie." he said, crossing the room again and laying his hand with respectful tenderness on the dog's head, "but her temper's no sweet. Noo, Colin!" he added sharply, turning around. Colin came crouching up to him, his eyes fixed on the cakes, smiling and wagging his tail. Jessie sat up, showing a lovely white shirt front that distracted Michael's attention from the puppies for a moment, and with solemn dignity caught bite after bite of cake, smacking her lips loudly over each one, as if she understood that she was assisting in Colin's punishment. Michael meanwhile was watching the puppies as they rolled helplessly about, and his whole being was filled with a consuming longing to have one of those yellow, fluffy bits of loveliness in his own hands, but he had no hope of its being gratified—and to such a small, vivid person as Michael, an ungratified longing was acute agony. But when Colquhoun had finished the deliberate administration of cake to Jessie, he went up to

## THE FAIRY ROAD

her in that tenderly respectful manner Michael had noticed before.

"Will ye let me ha'e a puppy for a wee?" he asked. "Ye ken ye can trust your master."

Jessie let him pick up a puppy, and he slowly and solemnly deposited it in Michael's arms. "Oh!" cried Michael. He spent a few minutes of utter rapture, while it wriggled and kicked and flopped its dear little paws about, and poked around with its funny little nose. But after old Colquhoun took it back Michael was conscious of another imperative desire. He *must* some day have a puppy of his very own.

"Weel, I'm glad ye cam'," remarked old Colquhoun, "for an extra mouth to eat up the cakes is no sic' a bad thing. I dinna like them stale. Here, tak' those and eat them on the way hame."

He gave Michael three cakes, and for some time this bliss put even puppies out of his head. He consumed one slowly as he walked along the path at the foot of the hill, for he liked to make his pleasures last, and besides, it was as nice to look at as it was to eat, and he would

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

be sorry to see the last of that beautiful colour. To be sure, there were two more—but it suddenly occurred to him that Susan and Nieder might like them, and for a little while a sharp struggle went on in his mind. Then he resolutely thrust the two cakes deep into his pocket, and ran along the little path to the bank of snow the sleds ran into. They were coming downhill now, and presently Susan and Nieder were precipitated into the bank. When they scrambled out, and saw Michael, they asked him where he had been.

“I’ve been to old Colquhoun’s. He gave me some cakes, and here’s one for each of you,” Michael replied, as he hastily held out the cakes, determined to get this arduous duty done at once. When Susan and Nieder had got started munching the cakes they did not seem disposed to ask any more questions, but Michael continued:—“He *didn’t* plough the Fairy Road!”

“Michael!” exclaimed Susan, in the utmost astonishment. “Do you know, my father didn’t, and neither did Nieder’s!”

## THE FAIRY ROAD

"I knew they didn't. I thought mine might have, but he didn't."

"Then it must have been fairies, when it wasn't people," Nieder had to admit reluctantly, between mouthfuls of cake.

"Of course. Old Colquhoun said it was fairies."

"I don't see how fairies *could* plough a path," said Susan.

"But they did," said Michael.

"What is old Colquhoun like?" inquired Susan.

"Well," said Michael, reflectively, "he's very like a bear."

"Like the great big bear?" asked Susan eagerly.

"No—he's not big enough for the great big bear, and he's too big for the little bear. He's more like the middle-sized bear."

"Father says he's very queer," said Susan.

"Yes," replied Michael. "He's queer. He wears an apron. But he's nice. I'm going to see him again."

## CHAPTER VIII

### CHRISTMAS

ABOUT this time Michael's father began to tell him a different sort of story as they sat together in the glow of the firelight before the time came to go to bed. It was not about fairies; it was about something much more wonderful, and somehow Michael never could get quite to the delicious heart of the wonder. He thought about it a great deal after he went to bed at night, and any time he happened to be alone and quiet during the day. He tried to get to the heart of it, as he always tried to get to the heart of any joy or pain, and extract from it the uttermost sensation—impelled by a sort of instinct to find out exactly how good or how bad a thing was; but he could not with this. Every time he thought of the angels coming to the shepherds, and the star guiding the wise men to the stable where the Child was, he felt hushed all over by a vast, sweet wonder. He

## CHRISTMAS

wanted his father to tell him more and more about the mysterious Child, who was just a little boy like him or Nieder, and yet so different. His father was always very willing to tell him; but one day he began to tell about the wicked Herod, and his efforts to find and kill Jesus, and the flight into Egypt. Michael suddenly burst out sobbing, and begged his father not to tell him any more. He felt he could not bear it, if Herod overtook and killed Jesus. He had a picture in his mind of Jesus wandering away alone, among flowers and bushes, unhurried and unafraid, in the aimless innocent way that he or Nieder would wander in the woods; utterly helpless as they would be, and this cruel pursuer, who could so easily find Him—oh, he *could* not bear it! Not for some time afterwards did Michael's father find out why he begged so passionately not to be told any more. He was puzzled, and stopped telling those stories for awhile, and dwelt on the other side of Christmas. He talked of Santa Claus, and asked Michael what he would like him to bring. Michael replied, looking up



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

with eager shining eyes:—"Oh, I'd like him to bring me a little puppy!"

"A little puppy," his father replied thoughtfully. "What sort of puppy?"

"A yellow fluffy one like old Colquhoun's!" cried Michael.

Michael's father saw some difficulties in Santa Claus' road that little people cannot understand, but the look in his boy's eyes went far toward deciding him that they must be overcome; however, his reply was cautious. "I don't think I ever heard of Santa Claus bringing a puppy," he said. "He may, of course, but it would be very hard to carry one all that way and keep it warm."

"He could put it under his coat," said Michael.

"So he could. Well, he may find he can bring it, but don't be too sure."

"I want one so much! I don't want anything but a puppy. Oh, yes, I want a toucan, but that is something I can find for myself."

"Couldn't you find a puppy in the same way?" inquired his father, smiling.

## CHRISTMAS

"No. I want a real puppy," was Michael's decided answer.

"Very likely Santa Claus can pick up some kind of a puppy, but he may not be able to find one like old Colquhoun's," replied his father.

Susan and Nieder began to talk about Christmas and Santa Claus too. Nieder wanted a mouth organ, and "much candy." Nieder generally wanted something to make a noise with, or something to eat. Susan's wish surprised Michael. "I want Santa Claus to bring me a mister doll—a knittity one," she said.

"I thought dolls were all shes!" exclaimed Michael.

"No, mother showed me a china doll she had when she was a little girl, that was a he. She called him Sheppy. But he wore skirts just like a she," Susan added contemptuously. "I want a knittity one with no clothes on at all, that we can take up to the Rebel's House. We need an extra he to do things."

"I don't see why we need a knittity doll. I

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

can get all the *hes* I want out of the woods," replied Michael.

"I'm so tired of that kind! I never know where they are. I want a knittity doll, so I can see just what he is doing."

"He would be fine," agreed Nieder heartily.

"I don't see the use of him, but if you want him as badly as I want my puppy, I hope you'll get him," replied Michael.

The wonderful evening came at last, and Michael looked doubtfully at his little socks as he hung them up. "I don't see how Santa Claus could get a puppy into them," he said tragically.

"He'll tie them to the puppy's tail, and hang him up that way," said his father. "That is—if he brings him, Michael."

The reluctant smile that this joke coaxed out vanished at that last awful hint. "Oh—I *hope* he'll bring him," said Michael.

"We'll get things all ready, anyway. Suppose I fix a basket between those two socks. Then the puppy will be quite comfortable."

After Michael was tucked into bed, his father

## CHRISTMAS

remarked:—"I think I'll go out for a walk. Perhaps I'll catch a glimpse of Santa Claus, and I'll look to see if his coat is bulgy. But you must be asleep when I come back, or if you're not, you mustn't open your eyes or ask me any questions."

Michael fell asleep long before his father came back, excited though he was. He fell asleep wondering if he would awaken to the tragedy of an empty basket, or if Santa Claus were even now on the way, with a bulgy spot in his coat.

It was dawn when he awoke. The basket was hanging beside the fireplace, suspended by the two little socks. He just couldn't see over the edge. He sat up; he could just catch a glimpse of something fluffy—and yellow—only the faintest glimpse, but enough to fill his whole small being with tremors of delight. He stood up. There, curled into a soft ball in the basket, was a dear little yellow thing, just exactly like the one that had wriggled in his arms for those few memorable moments in Colquhoun's kitchen. It was there. There could be no

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

doubt about it. A *real* puppy, to hold and fondle just as much as ever he liked!

That morning was full of the most vivid, satisfying bliss. Michael could think of nothing but his puppy. How he hugged and fondled him, and burrowed his cheek into his hair, and rolled him over and over and made him flourish his dear little paws, and with what delight he fed him! How indignant he was when his father suggested *Muichin*, which means Piggy, as a suitable name! With what grave, exasperating persistence his father stuck to this outrageous idea, and refused to consider the possibility of calling the puppy anything else! Only Michael felt sure, down in the bottom of his heart, that when he had found a nice enough name—if he ever *could* find one nice enough—his father would not insist on *Muichin*.

There was a sudden momentary check to this bliss at noon, when his father said:—"Now, Michael, we must get dressed and go over to Nieder's. His father and mother have asked us to Christmas dinner."

## CHRISTMAS

"Oh, can't we stay at home?" begged Michael.

"Why? You know you always enjoy going there."

"I don't want to leave the puppy!"

"He'll be all right. We can feed him last thing, and when they hear him gobbling they will know we are ready to start. He won't need anything more till we get back."

"I *can't* leave my puppy the very first day!" cried Michael, picking him up and cuddling him close.

"I don't believe they would mind if we bring him along," his father said, after a moment's deliberation.

Then all Michael's joy surged back with redoubled force. He felt so proud, taking his puppy out to dinner. It was a kingly thing to be doing! Any especially delightful thing, that made him feel big and grand, was kingly, in Michael's vocabulary.

Nieder's mother admired the puppy enthusiastically, and Nieder's father rolled him over on his back once or twice and called him a

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

dear little toad, and Nieder found him such an excellent plaything that he actually forgot to exhibit his mouth organ to Michael, till he was reminded. It would have been well if he had not been reminded, for Michael thought it was horrid, and said so with the candour characteristic of gentlemen of his tender years. This made Nieder angry, and they had a violent quarrel, and were not on speaking terms for half an hour; but the Christmas dinner proved a peacemaker. Michael thought Nieder's father and the fat turkey looked very much alike, and for the first time that day his mind was diverted from his puppy. He became suddenly aware that he was desperately hungry, for he had been so excited at breakfast time he had barely touched his porridge. He *couldn't* sit and wait for that turkey to be carved (a process which would never come to an end, he thought) and all those grown people to be helped, without wriggling and kicking, which he knew was bad manners. He had a keen sense of smell, and the fragrance of the turkey made the situation quite intoler-

## CHRISTMAS

able. "I don't like dinner here," he burst out at last. "I like it at home, where there is nobody else to be helped first."

His father was covered with confusion and humiliation at this remark. Such sentiments were quite unworthy of Michael. At home, he comported himself like a little gentleman, which he was to the marrow of his bones; why should he so suddenly do violence to his own nature, and burst out before those kind neighbours with sentiments appropriate nowhere but in the henyard or the pigsty? It was a most painful anomaly to his father, who blushed up to the roots of his hair, and blurted out incoherent apologies for Michael. "He was too excited to eat his breakfast—he must be hungrier than usual—I never knew him to act so before—"

"Poor little man!" said Nieder's mother, in a tone so warm and sympathetic that Michael's father felt a little eased. It showed that she understood that they were not really monsters of ingratitude for a hospitality which had touched him to the heart, coming from stran-



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

gers this first forlorn Christmas in the new country.

After this outbreak, Michael was very good; the reproof he got from his father was effective. His father had merely looked at him, and said:—"Shame on you, Michael!" but that was quite enough. Perhaps it was because his father's reproofs were rare and brief that they had such an effect when they came. They gave him a blighted feeling all over, especially down his legs. Experience had taught him that he got over this feeling and got quite happy again, but it was most unpleasant while it lasted—so unpleasant, that each time he called it down on himself he had a passionate ambition that this time should be the last. He only committed one more breach during that meal. He was blissfully picking his turkey bone, when the notion suddenly came to him to do what he had seen a hen do once, with a big crust in her mouth that stuck out a long way on each side. He put the bone in his mouth, and turned his head rapidly from side to side as he had seen the hen do; but his father had only to

## CHRISTMAS

say:—"Michael!" in a low tone, to stop him. He looked up wonderingly for an explanation of this prohibition. What harm could there be in doing as the hen did? But his father began to talk to Nieder's father, and took no more notice of him, and he resolved to try no more experiments. He had got Nieder started on the downward path, however, and Nieder, if harder to start, was also harder to stop. He began by shouting with laughter over Michael's gesture, then he imitated it, and continued to imitate it for some time, in spite of his parents' united protests. When he had at last been persuaded to desist, he began growling:—"Wao wao wao," over his bone, like the cat, and this was so irresistibly funny, that it required a great deal of self-restraint on Michael's part to keep from joining in, but he resolutely resisted the temptation.

After dinner, his pent-up high spirits broke loose in wild romps with Nieder and the puppy out in the kitchen, which lasted till it was time to go home. As he and his father were on their way there, he suddenly announced:—"I

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

want to go and see Susan and show her my puppy, and she wanted a knittity doll. I want to see if she got one."

So they turned in Susan's gate instead of their own. Neither of them had ever been in Susan's house before. Michael was familiar with its exterior. It was a big, old looking house, something like the Rebel's House, but not nearly so nice. "Isn't it a big, solemn looking house for Susan to live in?" he asked, as they approached.

"It is," his father agreed, remembering that lively and artful little person as she was the day he had encountered her in Nieder's house.

Michael discovered another point of inferiority to the Rebel's House as they approached the door. There was a knocker, but there was no lion's head on it. Perhaps Michael could not have given any other definite reason for its general inferiority; the secret of it was that the inhabitants were real people.

Susan opened the door, and Michael noticed first thing that she had a knittity doll with no clothes on, all striped red and white, dangling

## CHRISTMAS

from her hand. "Oh, you got your knittity!" he exclaimed. "Here's my puppy; isn't he a beauty?"

"Merry Christmas, Michael," said Susan, with a gracious smile, and overlooking Michael's impetuous lack of ceremony in the most dignified manner. "I suppose this is your father. How do you do, Mr.—Mr.—Mr. So-and-So? Please come in. Mother and father will be so glad to see you."

"You haven't looked at my puppy!" cried Michael indignantly, thrusting him at Susan.

But not till she had finished the weighty and responsible business of ushering them into the sitting room, and introducing them to her mother (a pale, ordinary looking person, Michael thought) would Susan occupy her mind with anything so frivolous as a puppy. After that she was enthusiastic, and cuddled the puppy tight, declaring he was "perfectly sweet." Then she exhibited her profusion of gifts, which were strewn everywhere around the room. None of them were of any interest to Michael, except the knittity. He could not

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

understand her delight in a box of paper dolls, which she showed off to him with the utmost pride till his patience was quite worn out, and he turned away to examine a most alluring what-not full of sea shells, and could not be persuaded to admire the doll's tea-set Susan was wild with delight over, or the coral necklace that adorned her. While she was trying to attract his attention to these things, the puppy got hold of the knittity, and both children made a wild scramble to his rescue. Michael caught the puppy by the scruff of the neck and shook him so roughly that he dropped the knittity at once, and Susan snatched him up. "Is he hurt?" asked Michael anxiously.

"No, I don't believe he is," said Susan proudly, examining the gaily striped body with care. "He was meant to stand everything, you know, so we can take him up to the Rebel's House."

"He wasn't meant to stand puppies' teeth," said Susan's mother. "He will tear, you know, though he won't break."

"I won't let the puppy touch him again,"

## CHRISTMAS

said Michael. He had taken a strong fancy to the knittity. His nakedness, his stripes, his short, kinky black hair, the look of boldness and impassivity in a countenance consisting solely of pale pink yarn, with two black beads for eyes, a pinched spot for a nose, and a red line for a mouth, gave him the appearance of a person who would go through all adventures with equal imperturbability—and much was required of the heroes in the Rebel's House!

"What is his name?" Michael asked.

"Mr. Musteed," said Susan. "He got married to the Musteed this morning."

"Who is the Musteed?"

"Why, surely you know her. She is my other knittity doll—the she, with the blue and yellow clothes on." Susan jumped up, ran away and got the Musteed, and stood her up beside her husband. Just then her father came in.

"Hello," he exclaimed as he stumbled over the puppy. "Where did this beast come from?"

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"That is my puppy," said Michael with dignity.

"Oh—you're here? Have a nice Christmas!"

"Yes," said Michael. "Here is my father."

Susan's father made some rough apologies for not having seen and greeted Michael's father at first. They had a long talk after that, and it was only when it was time to go that Susan's father remembered his full duty as host, which required him to make some jocular remark to Michael.

"Look out that puppy of yours doesn't take to killin' sheep when he grows up," he said.

"My puppy will never do anything bad," Michael retorted indignantly.

"H'm! Perhaps he'll be deep enough never to let you know if he does. They're a rum lot, those collies—you never can trust them. I wouldn't be paid to own one. If he kills a sheep, remember, he will have to be shot!"

"I'll never let any one shoot him! I'll shoot any one who tries!" cried Michael, his eyes suddenly blazing with anger.

## CHRISTMAS

"Then a policeman will pick you up and carry you off to jail, and keep you there for the rest of your life," replied Susan's father.

This was the most awful prospect that could have been held out to Michael, yet he resolved to face it, rather than let his puppy be shot; but just at this point, he noticed that Susan was laughing, so he knew it must all be a joke. He forced a smile then, although he could not see any fun in that sort of joke.

"I didn't know you were trying to be funny, till I saw Susan laughing," he explained.

Susan's father looked at him, then he burst into a roar of mirth, which was extremely puzzling to Michael. He could not see what anybody could find to laugh at in such a simple statement of fact. "Susan says her father says old Colquhoun is queer," he remarked reflectively on the way home, "but I think he is queerer himself."

When he was being tucked into bed that night, he said with a great sigh of thankfulness:—"I'm so glad I'm not Susan's father's little boy!"



## CHAPTER IX

### THE DRIVE TO TOWN

IT was a great event to Michael to go to town, which happened only once in several months. Susan was inclined to laugh at his excitement over the trip, for she went once a week, and to her it was only a long, tedious drive with a still more tedious session in church at the end. Her parents were so convinced of the importance of a regular attendance at church, that they sacrificed their Sunday morning's rest, and were all ready to start by nine o'clock, which brought them to civilisation just in time. The benefit Susan derived from this pious practice may be inferred from a complaint she once made to Michael that "they have changed the minister and got one with a loud voice, who wakens me up," and she graphically illustrated his shouts and gestures, prancing about the landing in the Rebel's House as she had seen

## THE DRIVE TO TOWN

him prance about the pulpit, causing Michael and Nieder to regard the race of ministers in anything but a reverential manner.

Michael did not wonder that Susan was not fond of trips to town, under those circumstances; his trips were widely different. He and his father had one about a month after Christmas. This was a bright, cold morning, and Michael thought it great fun to be packed into the big sleigh, with his puppy beside him and a brick at his feet; they were both wrapped up so snug and tight that they could hardly stir, then his father got in beside them and they were off along the silent, deserted road. Michael delighted in the gliding, swaying motion of the sleigh; he laughed for pure joy, and cuddled his puppy close. But it must be admitted that the first freshness of this delight wore off; his active little limbs grew intolerably weary of the continued inaction, and it was hard to kick and squirm in his wrappings, and the puppy grew restless, too. He began to ask his father impatiently:—"When are we going to get there?" and so endless did the

## THE GLOR AND THE DREAM

monotony of snow and sun and sleighbells, and long, lonely road, seem, that he would not have been in the least surprised if his father had replied:—"We'll never get there." However, they did, after a long, long time. "Town" with them did not mean the metropolis; there was no metropolis within easy reach. Neither did it mean the mixed up assembly of houses, each one rakish, careless or squalid in a distinctly individual manner, scrambled about over hilly streets or huddling in hollows, amid a delightful confusion of noisy children, dogs, pigs, and calves, with the occasional excitement of a fight to bring the habitual tumult to a head, and the eternal calm of the monastery gardens for a contrast, which had been known as "the town" in those far away Irish days. As they drove into the straight, quiet streets of this town, with the rows of houses all looking so solemn and well-behaved, and not a sound to break the wintry stillness, Michael turned a wondering pair of eyes up to his father. "Is it just monks and nuns who live here?" he asked.

## THE DRIVE TO TOWN

"No indeed. There are no monks or nuns here at all. The Saesanaigh don't have monks or nuns," his father replied.

"Is it the Saesanaigh who live here?"

"Mostly people whose fathers and grandfathers were Saesanaigh."

They drove up to the door of a store, and got out, the puppy frisking with delight at this welcome release. His father had a great many groceries to buy, and Michael and the puppy amused themselves inhaling the delicious odour that pervaded the store. The principal ingredients were coffee and onions, and perhaps the odour would not have appealed to cultivated nostrils, but it is doubtful which of those two primitive creatures inhaled it with the keener relish. They wandered up and down the store, the puppy making friends with the other customers, and at last Michael said to a man who stood waiting to be served:—"Are there any fights in town to-day?"

"Fights?" exclaimed the man, as if he did not know what fights were, and had never heard of them.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"Fights," repeated Michael with vigour and distinctness.

"We don't have fights here, unless a few fellows get full," replied the man, as if this were a circumstance to be proud of.

"What do they get full of?" inquired Michael.

The man made some funny sounds in his throat. "Never you mind, and see you never find out," was his enigmatical reply.

Michael stared at him for a moment, bewildered and curious. Then he said:—"Why do they have to get full before they fight?"

"Because they don't fight if they know what they're doing, of course."

"Do they not *want* to fight?" exclaimed Michael, in astonishment.

"We're not spoiling for fights around these diggings. I'll take a pound of coffee," the man said abruptly to an approaching clerk.

Michael was silent and reflective during the rest of the tedious period in which his father was laying in a store of groceries for the next

## THE DRIVE TO TOWN

few months. Whatever could be the use of a town where there were no fights? And why were there none of those lovely silent gardens, into which you could slip if you were looked on with favour by their grey, noiseless-footed inhabitants, and steep yourself in sunshine and fragrance, away from the jarring noises of the outer world?

But these reflections were soon banished by the tyrannical pangs of hunger, overriding every other thought and sensation. Only after they had had a good lunch at a hotel did his mind once more become active in other directions. They went to another store afterwards, to get oats for the horses, and wheat for the hens, and bran for the cow; then they went to the postoffice, and while they were there a train came in. That commonplace event was a wonderful phenomenon to Michael. He stood gazing as it ground along over the frosty rails, his whole small frame throbbing in sympathy with its mighty pulsations, his soul swallowed up in the hideous but majes-

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

tic tumult. The shrieks and grating groans, the overwhelming explosions of the escaping steam, set him on edge, made him want to scream and snarl in a passionate revolt; and yet he was fascinated. There was something in the beat of the piston that filled him with a delicious excitement, made him feel big, and strong, and "kingly." He wanted to know all about the wonderful thing. The bell began to ring presently, and he knew that meant it was going to start. Just at that moment he caught sight of his puppy, who had wandered away from him unobserved. The little soft, wriggling form was right between those great wheels. He had scarcely seen this, before he was off the platform, and had him in his arms; and scarcely had this happened, before he felt his father's hands grabbing him, and he and the puppy were back on the platform, his father clasping them tight. They were clasped much tighter than was comfortable; his father's chest was heaving strangely, and Michael knew he was violently agitated. "I've got him quite safe," he said.

## THE DRIVE TO TOWN

"Oh, Michael!" was all the reply his father could make.

Michael had always wanted to do something brave—to be a patriot and kill the wicked Sacsanaigh who made the Eirionnaigh unhappy, or to be a sailor, or kill a lion; but it never occurred to him that he had done anything particularly brave in saving his puppy from under the wheels of an engine. If Susan's father had again accosted him as the wonderful Michael, he would again have replied, regretfully, that he had never done anything wonderful. He was conscious of no mental process whatever between the moment he saw the precious creature between the wheels, and the moment when he felt the soft body in his hands. He had not thought:—"I will save him," or "I must save him." He had simply saved him, without even knowing he was doing it until afterward.

All the way home he cuddled the puppy close, and snuggled his face down often beside the little head that stuck out of the wrappings. "*A stóirín mo chroidhe!*" (little treasure of



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

my heart) he kept crooning into the dear hairy ears. "I *couldn't* do without him!" he told his father once.

He took a passionate interest in trains for some time after this. He asked his father long strings of questions about them at every meal, till he had a fairly clear idea of their mechanism, the perils they encountered, the precautions their engineers and conductors and flagmen had to take to avoid wrecks. He forgot that he had ever wanted to be a patriot or a sailor or a lion killer; the one consuming desire of his heart was to be an engineer. As that desire could not be immediately gratified, the next best thing was to play at trains every day in the Rebel's House, for as long as Susan and Nieder could be prevailed on to do it. The old sofa where the corn-cobs lay in a row was converted into a train containing passengers by the simple process of setting the corn-cobs up against the back, with Mr. Musteed at one end for engineer. A soap-box was set opposite it; Susan was packed in (she was a tight fit) and Michael, standing in

## THE DRIVE TO TOWN

front, was engine and engineer in one. He imitated the whistle as well as he could in his clear musical voice, and rang a bell. A plank between the two trains represented a bridge, and Nieder, standing on this plank, was the flagman, who vainly waved a stick with a red flag at the end. The engineers tried their best to stop, and Mr. Musteed succeeded, but Michael was on a down grade and could not check his progress by the most violent efforts. Everybody behaved with the utmost gallantry; the flagman did not abandon his post till Michael's train had almost crashed into Mr. Musteed's, and there was just time to jump; Michael's passengers, in the person of Susan, sat with clasped hands and head held high, wearing an expression of the noblest heroism, awaiting their fate; Mr. Musteed's passengers maintained an equal, if less impressive calm; when the crash came, trains and passengers were immediately dumped into the river, and it happened to be just at the rapids (the combination engine and engineer overturned the soap-box, and the flagman overturned the

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

sofa). Most heroically did those engineers battle with the current, and they were sucked under in the act of rescuing their passengers again and again; but they always succeeded finally in rescuing every one. Sometimes Nieder was the combination engine and engineer of the soap-box, and Michael was the runaway engine, dashing into him from the other side of the room and knocking him over most unmercifully; or else Michael was the exploding engine. His explosions were a continual source of wonder to Susan and Nieder, who could not get half the amount of noise out of their lungs together, that he could unaided. As soon as the explosion took place Susan leaped up as high as she could, flung the soap-box across the room with a crash, and then fell down on her face and waited to be rescued by the exploded engine in his capacity of engineer.

But the next trip to town was so rich in new experiences that it put trains completely out of Michael's head. This one took place on a beautiful May morning—a morning when Mi-

## THE DRIVE TO TOWN

Michael had been tingling and dancing with joy in every nerve from the moment he awoke. He was ready for any delight that might offer itself; so when he had to climb up into the front seat of the big green waggon, and inhale the odour of horse and harness, and look down from his eminence on Brian Boroinbe (who was growing up into a dog now, and had a name at last) exclaiming mischievously:—“How small he looks away down there!” he thought there could be no greater height of happiness. Then they rumbled off, out of the gate and down the hill, Michael shouting good-bye to Susan as they passed her in her father’s field, Brian bounding after them. He had got past the cuddly stage now, but he was much more serviceable as a playfellow. He could race, and he and Michael could play tug of war with a rope, and it was all Michael could do to hold his own against him. Needless to say, these trials of strength were a keen delight to both of them. Brian’s head and nose were lengthening out, and the white streak on the top of his head was narrowing down till Mi-

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

chael saw, with regret, that it would ultimately disappear. He hated to see any of Brian's attributes disappear; every bit of him was precious. On the other hand, the white round his neck was widening. Michael was proud of that white collar and shirt front, and was distressed on rainy mornings when it got all muddy and soiled. But it was beautifully white this morning. "Everybody in town will wish they had a dog like him!" he exclaimed joyfully, as they rumbled down the hill.

When they got on to the river road, Michael had the joy of driving for awhile. This was a magical joy; the only drawback was that he could not hold the reins carelessly and easily, between the thumb and fingers of one hand, as his father did. For him, the inexorable rule was:—"One rein in each hand." He would have felt so much bigger, so much grander, if he could have held them that other way, as if guiding a horse were a mere incident to him.

The road did not seem a bit too long this time; for one thing, there were so many nice

## THE DRIVE TO TOWN

smells all the way. There were moist, cool smells, suggestive of brooks in the woods and splashing and puddling in bare feet; there were warm, piny smells that seemed to tingle through you with the restless delight of spring; there were whiffs of violets. Always, on one side, there was the great, sunlit river; on the other, there were sometimes woods, in the recesses of which anything wonderful might be concealed. Michael always peered eagerly into their dim mystery as he passed. Sometimes there were steep banks, with patches of violets, or stretches of dandelion-sprinkled grass upon them; sometimes there were wide green fields. Brian poked along, deeply interested in every inch of the road, sniffing, burrowing, the pose of his ears and tail showing his absorption. Michael wriggled about, and swung his legs, and leaned out over the wheel in a most dangerous manner, when anything special attracted his attention, and with eyes, ears, nose and imagination all alert, enjoyed himself in every fibre of his being. Sometimes he subsided into intervals of

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

dreamy quiet, letting the spring sun steep him to the heart; after one of these intervals he looked up into his father's face, saying:—"Isn't it nice to be happy?"

He would have liked to go on and on along that road, and never stop, but they came to the town at last. The gardens were full of red and yellow flowers, glowing in the sun, and when they came out of the grocery store with their purchases the air was pervaded with the smell of people's dinners, which set Michael's appetite on edge, so they got their dinner before they did any more shopping. Michael got very tired of the shopping. He enlivened it in one store by scraping acquaintance with another little boy who came in while he was there, and that was very pleasant while it lasted. He told him all about Brian, and about coming out from Ireland with his father the year before, and the house they built for themselves. The boy patted Brian, stared, and said:—"Gee!" which Michael supposed was the English equivalent of "*Maiseadh!*" or "*Ach aidhe!*" and accordingly he made use of

## THE DRIVE TO TOWN

it in polite conversation with Susan's mother a few days later. In return, the boy informed him that he had had scarlet fever, and had changed his skin; which caused Michael's eyes to become even bigger than usual, and he regarded the boy as a wonderful and curious being. But the interview was all too short, for after fifteen minutes' conversation the boy suddenly exclaimed:—"Jimminy! Ma said I had to be back in five minutes with a spool of white silk thread, and now she'll be chewing the rag like mad!"

"She'll what?" exclaimed Michael in a tone of lively interest. He always was interested in new words and expressions. But the boy had already turned to the clerk, and in another minute had bolted out of the store, leaving Michael with an enlarged vocabulary.

There was nothing to relieve the tedium after this till they went to the shoe store, and there Michael suddenly became mischievous, and had his father and the clerk at their wits' end before he was finally provided with a pair of new shoes. Once he was settled in the wag-



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

gon to go home he subsided, and was very quiet all the way. It was late by this time, and the low sun made a glow of light on the river; as he was on the side of the waggon next it, he watched it all the way home. The mystery of the river gripped his heart. It stretched away so far—right to the edge of the world, where the sky came down and joined it—where the sunset glowed like birds of paradise, or toucans' breasts. What wonderful regions did it not flow through? He made up his mind that some day he would have a boat, and sail up that river till he got to where the sky joined the world. He would find fairies, lions, toucans—all the wonderful things he could never find at home. Just then he saw something black on the water, against the glow of the sky. He watched it with passionate eagerness. It was getting bigger,—and coming nearer; it was one of the wonderful things out of the unknown regions! Presently a faint sound of music came to his ears. "Oh, Father, what is that?" he asked breathlessly.

## THE DRIVE TO TOWN

"I think it's a lumberman's raft," his father replied.

"I thought it was some fairy thing, and I thought it *might* be a toucan swimming along and singing," said Michael, a little disappointed. But a lumberman's raft was by no means devoid of glamour. For one thing, Michael had very little idea what a raft was, and he watched its approach with great curiosity. The singing became more distinct, a hearty, rhythmic chorus that haunted Michael pleasantly for days afterwards. They met and passed the raft. Michael surveyed with eager interest the great timbers bound together, the rough, dirty group of men that stood on them, singing. Their appearance would not have prepossessed him under any other circumstances; but they came from the edge of the world, he had seen them with his own eyes emerge from the sunset, therefore they must have drunk deep draughts of the wonders he hungered and thirsted for. And what joy to be paddling a raft down a river!

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"I'm going to be a lumberman just as soon as I'm big enough!" he announced to his father.

"Are you?" said his father, smiling. He had heard Michael announce before, with the same decision, at different periods, that he was going to be a patriot, and a sailor, and an engineer.

His father was put through the same sort of catechism about lumbermen that he had been put through about engineers, with the result that Mr. Musteed changed his occupation. Five or six times a day he sailed down the brook in the woods on a raft, while Michael sang for him the song he had heard on the river; he so frequently fell off his raft into the brook that he became a most disreputable looking object. His red stripes faded out, so did the red line that indicated his mouth; besides, he got so full of mud and sand that he could not be shaken, beaten, or washed quite clean; but the more war-worn he became, the more highly valued he was by Michael. Every fresh disfiguration was a mark of faithful service, and brought him closer to Michael's heart.

## THE DRIVE TO TOWN

He had many adventures besides those trifling ones of getting wrecked with his engine, and drowned in the brook, and shot in battle, which were simply a part of the day's work. Susan was very careless about leaving him lying about in the woods, or in the tall weeds about the Rebel's House. Over and over again she scurried off when she heard the gong for dinner or tea, leaving him lying just where she happened to have had him last. Michael always picked him up and ran after her with him, but one night, when he saw her starting off empty handed, he could not find Mr. Musteed. He shouted:—"Susan! Susan!" but she ran on, paying no attention. He ran after her, and overtook her at last in front of the Rebel's House.

"Susan, where did you leave Mr. Musteed?" he demanded.

Susan stared blankly. "I don't know," she said at last.

"Then he's *lost!*" cried Michael.

"Oh, we'll find him to-morrow," said Susan, starting to run off again.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"But we can't leave him till to-morrow. We have got to find him to-night," Michael insisted.

"Mother will only give me bread and milk for tea and send me to bed half an hour early if I'm late," said Susan, rushing off.

"Nieder, you stay and help me find him," said Michael.

"I won't. We will have morells for tea to-night, and they will be cold," replied Nieder indignantly, rushing off after Susan. Michael watched them disappear among the weeds, the low sun giving occasional shining glimpses of Nieder's bobbing yellow head, and something hurt him inside like a sharp stone. Mr. Musteed was *lost*! What was a supper of bread and milk, or cold morells, or even his own father's grave displeasure, the loss of a whole evening's genial cheer, and a sad going to bed, compared to this calamity? He could not go home without Mr. Musteed. He didn't see how Susan could, and Nieder was a mean little pig to refuse to find him just for the sake of hot morells. How could any one eat

## THE DRIVE TO TOWN

morells, or anything else, while Mr. Musteed was lost? A great sob escaped Michael before he knew it was coming, and more would have followed if he had not choked them down. He must not cry, for he must have his eyes to look for Mr. Musteed. He was not going home till he found him, even if it took all night. He went back to the woods, and hunted in every spot where they had been playing, along the brook, and in the place that was full of the little white flowers that the fairies planted, and along the great crumbling pine log that smelled so nice. For the first time these places were devoid of charm, cold and blank, because Mr. Musteed was lost. The sun got lower and lower, and made the tree trunks look as if they were all made of gold, but even this wonderful effect could not delight Michael as it would have done at any other time. He scarcely noticed when the sun disappeared, and the magical gold vanished in dusky shadows. All the familiar spots grew dimmer and dimmer; he had to peer at first, and then to feel, into dark hollows where Mr.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

Musteed might be. Each desperate leap of his heart in hope made the disappointment more sickening when a closer look revealed only pine needles or black muck, or his hand met only cold moist earth instead of the woolen body it ached to feel. Everything about him grew cold and damp, his boots were so wet that they were tight and uncomfortable. Suddenly something bounded against him, and Brian was licking his face. He threw his arms around the dog and burst out sobbing.

"Michael!" his father's voice exclaimed. "Were you lost?"

"I'm not—lost—it's Mr. Musteed!" sobbed Michael.

"What do you mean, *alannah*? What has kept you here all this time? I thought you were lost, and I have been hunting everywhere for you." His father had picked him up and was carrying him home, big and heavy though he was.

"I couldn't come home till I found Mr. Musteed,—and Susan and Nieder wouldn't help me—Susan was afraid of her mother—

## THE DRIVE TO TOWN

and Nieder wanted his tea—and Mr. Musteed's *lost!*"

Michael did not often cry as he cried on the way home that evening. Brian kept jumping up, trying to reach him to comfort him. When they got home, his father made a big fire in the fireplace, and set him down before it, and told him he was cold and must get warmed up; but Michael himself did not realize that he was cold, although he was shivering, or realize anything except that Mr. Musteed was lost. His father bathed his feet in hot water, and gave him a drink of hot milk. He never could drink hot milk afterwards without remembering the night Mr. Musteed was lost. Then his father tried to make him eat something, but the food seemed to stick in the place where the sharp stone had been when he saw Susan and Nieder running home through the weeds. When he went to bed, Brian showed his sympathy and concern by insisting on curling up on his feet.

For some days after that he wore out Susan's and Nieder's patience by his persistence



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

in hunting for Mr. Musteed. He refused to play at anything, till Mr. Musteed was found. At last, one day, he came to a place in the brook where a lot of rubbish was stuck, and a muddy thing with two legs hanging down was caught there. In a moment he had pulled it out, and was shaking off the mud. The object had two arms, and a head, and when several layers of mud were removed, he discovered that there were two black beads for eyes. It did not matter in the least to Michael that it was all wobbly and floppy, and there was not a hint left of the red and white stripes that had been so gay, and the most thorough washing in the brook would still leave it a grimy object; this was Mr. Musteed, more dearly beloved than ever, and with wild shouts of joy he announced the discovery of the lost hero.

## CHAPTER X

### OLD COLQUHOUN

By this time Michael and old Colquhoun had become great friends. Michael often went over to see him, always bringing Brian, for old Colquhoun liked Brian, and gratified Michael's sensitive pride in him by warm and discriminating praise. Jessie was always glad to see Brian, too; as soon as she saw them coming she bounded up to him, licking and mouthing him all over, with eloquent grunts and groans of affection, while he lay down and luxuriated in this treatment. "What does she do it for?" Michael often asked.

"Is it no strange?" remarked old Colquhoun, in a profoundly speculative tone. One great attraction old Colquhoun had was that he seldom answered a question directly, and invested the simplest subject with mystery.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

This habit was tantalising, exasperating sometimes, but it was delightful, to any one who loved mystery as Michael did.

Jessie had only one of her puppies left now. This was a puppy called 'Tam o' Shanter, just Brian's size, and exactly like him in colour and markings. Tam's white streak on the head disappeared just when Brian's did; like Brian, he had a white collar and shirt front, white paws, one foreleg white up to the knee, and a white tip to the tail. But he was not really a bit like Brian; he was what Michael called "a wiggly waggly dog." He showed his affection by winding himself around your feet and grovelling under your boots. Jessie was a solemn dog. She followed her master about when he was working outside, slowly and gravely, watching everything he did; if he was sitting on the steps talking to Michael, Jessie sat down beside him with the utmost dignity, and scarcely moved while the conversation was going on. Brian and Tam played about, and Jessie sometimes turned her head to watch

## OLD COLQUHOUN

their movements, with a regal tolerance for such frivolous proceedings.

"Jessie is a grand dog," Michael remarked once, almost awed by the solemnity of her aspect.

"She is that, Michael," replied old Colquhoun, and Michael knew at once from his tone that he had pleased him more than he had ever pleased him before. Then he added sorrowfully:—"Her son will never be like her."

"He's just the same colour," said Michael.

"Aw yes," said old Colquhoun slowly. "If it was only colour! Ma Jessie's getting auld, and I was foolish enough to think a puppy o' hers would grow perhaps, no to fill her place—nae dog can do that, Jessie—but to sort o' mak' a break i' the blank, when she is deid."

At this point Jessie turned round to her master, and slowly, gravely put her paw into his hand. He took it silently, looking into her face for a moment. "It's fearsome!" he said presently, under his breath. "Mon, it's fear-

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

some! It's no safe to speak o' onything before her. Sometimes I think she kens ma verra thochts!"

"Did she understand what you were saying?" asked Michael, in breathless awe. Jessie was rapidly becoming invested with the mystery that surrounded her master.

"I canna tell. But I'm thinkin' I dinna ken ma auld Jessie sae weel as she kens me."

From that day the stately old dog had all the fascination of something "no canny," to use Colquhoun's expression, for Michael. He used to watch them sitting together, and delightful shivers ran down his back. He gradually became convinced that old Colquhoun had been at one time, if he was not actually at present, intimately associated with fairies. Colquhoun did nothing to dispel this idea, indeed he seemed to enjoy it. Michael could never, by the most persistent questioning, get him to say he had ever had dealings with them, but he encouraged the idea that they abounded everywhere, and might any time be discovered among the underbrush in

## OLD COLQUHOUN

the woods, or the tall weeds about the Rebel's House, or in the dim and dusty recesses of the old barn. He had a way of talking about them that made them more and more mysterious and exciting. One day Michael brought him one of the "flowers the fairies planted," explaining that it was too white and small and beautiful to be a real flower. Old Colquhoun looked at it, and said:—"Weel, weel." Somehow, after that, Michael could almost see where the fairies' hands had touched it.

Once he brought Susan and Nieder to see Colquhoun, but that was not a successful experiment. They stared and looked blank at everything he said. Susan was confirmed in her impression that he was queer, and Nieder agreed with her. They took their departure much sooner than Michael, and as Colquhoun watched Nieder's retreating back, he remarked meditatively to Jessie:—"Yon's a braw, hale beastie. I ken ilka thing he'll do a' his life."

"What will he do?" inquired Michael curiously.

"I canna be fashed tellin' ye," replied old

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

Colquhoun carelessly. "He's a guid laddie, a verra guid laddie, I ha'e nae doot, and he'll be a guid mon. But he's unco tame!"

Michael felt hot at this criticism of Nieder. He would not have minded half as much hearing any other fault attributed to his playmate as that of being "unco tame." He had always hated tameness so. "Nieder is a fine fellow," he retorted. "If you played with him—I mean, if you were a little boy, and played with him,—you would know how nice he is."

"Nae doot," said old Colquhoun. "But he's gey easy to ken. I dinna like to ken onybody ower weel."

The summer passed on, and Brian and Tam got bigger and bigger. They still kept pace exactly. "Isn't it funny that they look exactly alike?" Michael said one day. "One isn't even any bigger than the other."

"But they're no alike. Your Brian is going to be like Jessie when he is grown. Even noo, I sometimes catch the grave look in his e'en. Ma Tam is nae mair like Jessie than if he hadna a drap o' her bluid in his veins. I canna like

## OLD COLQUHOUN

Tam; I hinna patience wi' his ways. He kens ower weel to use his e'en at ye, and kiss and wheedle. There's nae dignity in him. I'm thinkin' he'll no end weel."

Michael sometimes felt sorry for Tam, when he saw how coldly and sharply the dog was treated by his master, but he could not like him either. His blandishments were a little too effusive even for a small boy who was by no means inclined to be fastidious. It soon became evident that Brian disliked him also. They became peevish and irritable at their play, and began snarling and showing their teeth at each other; at last, one hot afternoon, they flew at each other's throats. Before either of their excited masters could intervene, Jessie had stopped the fight by one calm bound between them. After that, Michael never brought Brian over to old Colquhoun's.

His father became interested in old Colquhoun, as he heard a great deal about him, and remarked one day:—"I think he might come over to see me sometimes." Accordingly, Michael inquired when he was sitting on old Col-



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

quhoun's doorstep that afternoon:—"Why don't you come over to see my father?"

"I've been thinkin' I'd like to ken your feyther," said old Colquhoun; but just as Michael was opening his lips to urge him he abruptly changed the subject. Every time Michael broached it he behaved in the same manner, till at last Michael succeeded in pinning him down to a reason. He blurted it out in such a funny way that Michael thought he must be shy—but surely old men were never shy. "I'm no used to gaeing into ither people's hooses," he said. "Ma claes are no fit."

"They're not much worse than Susan's father's," said Michael, surveying him critically. (Susan's father would not have been flattered. Old Colquhoun was at present arrayed in an undershirt and a pair of trousers.) "He came over yesterday in a vest pinned with a safety pin."

"Ye ken ma coat—it's ripped doon the back. Na, na, I couldna gae into onybody's hoose in that!"

"Father would show you how to mend it.

## OLD COLQUHOUN

He's learned to sew up rips and put in patches."

Old Colquhoun's face suddenly cleared. He looked at Michael for a moment. "Oh!" he exclaimed in a tone of joyful relief. "It's juist your feyther and yourself?"

"Yes," said Michael. He thought the sudden alacrity with which old Colquhoun yielded was due to the prospect of being taught how to mend, and he joyfully escorted him over. After that he was a frequent visitor, and he and Michael's father became great friends.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE TOUCAN

MICHAEL never quite forgot his desire for a toucan, although it was very much in the background this summer, the games in the woods, and old Colquhoun, and Brian, were all so absorbing. But one day, when he was having one of his "happy by myself times," he wandered out into the field where the squash and melon hills were. It was almost dinner time, and there was a deep hush over everything. It was a hazy day, and there was something in the air that made Michael feel good. It was the first hint of fall, with the attendant cosiness and cheer, but Michael did not know that. He only knew he felt nice all through, and he wanted to go off by himself to think. As he was wandering about among the squash hills, he suddenly saw something golden, with a long curved neck, among the leaves. Here was a

## THE TOUCAN

toucan—at last! He pounced on it at once, tore it away from among the leaves, and rushed into the house, shouting to his father:—"I've found my toucan! I've found my toucan!"

His father did not say that it looked to him remarkably like a crookneck squash. He smiled, and said it was a fine toucan, and let Michael deposit it on the end of the bench where the water pails stood. Why he should choose that particular spot for the magic bird, and why it was never moved from there, Michael himself did not know, and certainly nobody else did. But every morning, as soon as he got up, and every night before he went to bed, he ran to the bench to stroke his "golden beautiful toucan," and he did the same whenever he came home from a drive to town. He saved choice morsels from every meal, and set them before it. Brian became very fond of that end of the bench.

It was so golden! Such a rich, satisfying golden. Michael loved all golden and yellow things. Perhaps, if Brian had been black or brown or white instead of yellow, he would

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

have loved him as well, but his love would not have been of just the same poignant nature. Certainly he could have glorified nothing of a tamer hue, as he did that golden toucan. One chilly September evening they were driving home from town after dark; the waggon had to be repaired, and Fionn had to be shod, besides all the usual shopping, and this had kept them late. Michael's father was tired and sad; it was not unusual for him to be sad, but he generally concealed the fact from Michael. To-day, however, many little things had been occurring to induce a fit of discouragement, and to aggravate the lonely heartache of which Michael had only once had a faint, dimly understood glimpse—the time he had cried after seeing Nieder's mother, and his father had shown such tender comprehension of his tears. It did not alleviate this loneliness to know he was coming home to a dark, cold, empty house, and would have to light the fire, cook the tea, attend to the horses and cow, and put Michael to bed, before he could retire to his own well-earned rest. He had

## THE TOUCAN

been saddened, too, by the sight of a forlorn little family group that got off the train while he was at the station; a woman with a pale, frightened face (plainly the face of a stranger in a strange land), a baby in her arms, and another child beside her, and a frail looking man, aged by illness, who carried a bundle in one hand and leaned heavily on a cane with the other. Michael's father could not get them out of his head. "Those poor people!" he broke out to Michael when they were nearly home.

"What people?" asked Michael.

"Those people we saw at the station—lonely strangers, like ourselves, trying to scratch a home together in the new land."

"But why are they poor people? It's the greatest fun! Do you think they're going to build a house for themselves, like us? Do you remember what good times we had building our house?"

"Yes," replied his father listlessly. Michael was quick to feel the lack of sympathy in his tone.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"Wasn't it fun?" he insisted.

"Great fun for you," his father replied heavily. Then he suddenly felt a stab of self-reproach. Had he not always gloried in his son's high spirit and courage? Had he any right to cast a damper on the boy because he happened to be cold and tired himself, discouraged and hungry? "Yes, it was fun for both of us," he added. "And no doubt those people will get fun out of it too, if they go about it the right way. I was only sorry for them because they looked tired and strange."

As they turned up the hill their house was only visible as a dark blot in the starlight, but Michael exclaimed:—"Look! There's a beautiful golden light in the window! It's the toucan!" As they turned in the gate, he cried:—"It's singing a loud sweet song because it's glad we are coming back!"

The house that was so dark and dreary to his father as they entered, was full of a golden glow, of song and cheer, for him. His father often thought that he was unconsciously try-

## THE TOUCAN

ing to make the toucan supply the warmth and brightness a mother's presence would have given.

The toucan's loud sweet song had magical powers. About this time Michael's father read Kipling's "Jungle Book" to him, and the book took so strong a hold of Michael's imagination that he fairly lived in it for months afterwards. The black cat became Bahgeera the panther, and never again subsided into a mere black cat. The commonplace Plymouth Rock hens were transformed into wolves (surely a triumph of imagination!), while one with a rose comb was Mother Wolf. Every night she came to the house and made a disturbance, and Brian and Bahgeera fought her in vain—she was bent on mischief, and got in by all sorts of fantastic means, such as stealing into the cellar and gnawing a hole through the floor. But as soon as she heard the toucan's loud sweet song she slunk away, conquered and subdued. When Brian was naughty the toucan's loud sweet song made him good, and it had



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

the same effect on Michael. One night, as he was going to bed, his father praised him for having been a particularly good boy.

"Oh, that was because the toucan was singing all day," he replied.

But unfortunately the toucan, if it had a mighty soul, had a sadly perishable body. It began to get black specks all over its back. This did not distress Michael. He knew toucans had black backs, and this one was probably only golden all over at first because it was young. Of course as it grew older it would get like other full-grown toucans. A twist came in its neck, too, but Michael loved it just as well. He was not one to turn the cold shoulder on his friends for any such trifles. His father understood and respected this feeling, and so he endured the toucan for a long time, but at last he felt that it really was his duty to decree its removal. Susan's father and Nieder's father looked at it with extraordinary expressions every time they came, and to attempt to explain its presence would have been worse than useless. Not that this

## THE TOUCAN

had any influence in deciding Michael's father to dispose of the toucan. Neighbourly criticism was a mere trifle, compared to the pain of broaching the subject to Michael. His courage failed him again and again, but at last, one evening, he remarked:—"Michael, I am afraid that poor old toucan won't last much longer."

"It isn't old—it is only growing up. It sang its loud sweet song all day to-day," Michael protested.

"It is old," his father insisted. "You have kept it a very long time, Michael, and I'm really afraid it will have to be—" Michael's father paused as if something had stuck in his throat. Any of the commonplace expressions one might apply to a crookneck squash—"thrown out," or "destroyed," or "burned"—sounded so outrageously brutal when applied to a "golden beautiful toucan."

"Oh, Father, you're not going to make me give up the toucan?" exclaimed Michael piteously.

"Yes, Michael, I must. It really can't be

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

kept in the house any longer. I know you will be a good, brave boy, and not make a fuss, when I say it will have to be done. It will have to be done to-morrow."

So Michael went quietly, if sadly to bed, determined to be brave and not make a fuss, although the amputation of a limb could hardly have tried his courage more severely. Of course, very unpleasant things had to be faced,—he knew that, although he had never had to face any, except the removal of a few loose teeth. The first time one of his teeth had begun to waggle he had been much distressed, and had gone to the cupboard to look for something to stick it in with, but there was nothing on the shelves that looked promising, so he had been obliged to tell his father about it, although he knew by instinct that the consequences would not be agreeable. But he had borne them bravely, and when the ordeal was over had smiled and said:—"I'm glad now!" This was his first acquaintance with pain, and although it was a brief one, it gave him some idea of how brave soldiers had to be.

## THE TOUCAN

It was after this that he somehow got the idea that a great many unpleasant things had to be endured in the world—that was the difference between the world and Heaven. His last thought as he fell asleep, on the night of the conversation recorded above, was that there was dreadful unpleasantness in store for him to-morrow, but he must be brave about it. First thing when he awoke, and saw his father lighting the fire, he remembered this unpleasantness. When he tried to eat his breakfast every bite stuck halfway down, like the night Mr. Musteed was lost. He was determined that he *would* eat his breakfast—every bite—and show his father that he meant to be good; but he could not eat the last two bites of toast. He fixed his eyes on the crumbs on the table, and tried to divert his thoughts by playing that one big crumb was the town, and a little crumb some distance away was their waggon on the way to town. But in spite of his determined absorption in this idea, he felt the tears coming, and knew they would burst from him in another instant

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

if he continued to sit there, so he jumped up, and announced that he was going to the Rebel's House. He skipped out of the door, kicking up his heels, as if he were in the highest spirits, but once out of sight he indulged in a passionate outburst of tears. Then he went on to the Rebel's House, and was very wild and gay and noisy all morning; but he never once forgot that when he came home to dinner he would find the end of the bench empty, and no "golden beautiful toucan" would light up the house on dark nights any more. He came home slowly and sorrowfully, and tried not to look at the end of the bench as he went in, but something speckled, with a twisted neck, caught his eye, and he looked again. His toucan was still there!

He thought his father had forgotten to "do it" (he shrank from specifying, even in his own mind, what his father would do), and that the end of the bench would certainly be vacant at tea-time. But it was not. Neither was it vacant at bedtime. The next day, and the next, the toucan still remained, and nothing

## THE TOUCAN

more was said about it, execution. Michael wondered why his father had changed his mind. He wondered, a little anxiously, if he really had been good about it. Yes, he had. He hadn't made a bit of a fuss. Having satisfied himself that this was not the cause of his father's change of mind, he ceased to speculate on the subject, and only felt glad. He never dreamed that his endeavour to eat his breakfast as if nothing was the matter had done more to unman his father than any fuss would have done. The toucan remained on the end of the bench, and dried and shrank and shrivelled, till it was mostly twisted neck; but its golden light, still undimmed, and its loud sweet song, filled the house with glory and joy for Michael.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE MURDER OF MR. MUSTEED

MICHAEL was soon to find that all fathers were not built on the same lines as his own. One morning Susan appeared without Mr. Musteed. When Michael asked her where he was, she replied:—"Oh, Michael, father put him in the stove this morning. He—"

"*What?*" cried Michael. "Mr. Musteed isn't burned up?"

"Yes, father took him out of my hand and said he was too filthy for me to carry around any more."

Michael felt as if some great, heavy thing had shut down with a bang on the joyful world in which he moved, blotting out light and happiness by one awful stroke. He *couldn't* believe that Mr. Musteed was burned up—could never be rescued, never be found again—that he would never again see or touch

## THE MURDER OF MR. MUSTEED

that dear wobbly body. He was furious with rage at Susan's father, and hurt at Susan for the matter-of-fact tone in which she related the tragedy.

"It was *murder!*" he roared. "That's what it is when one man puts another man in the stove!"

"But he wasn't a man—he was only a doll."

"I don't believe you care an old rickety broken hook!"

"Of course I was sorry, but mother gave me such a beautiful piece of green silk for a dress for Jane Dove. It was out of an old dress of hers that was worn out. Just wait till you see Jane Dove dressed up in it!"

"I don't want to see her."

"Don't be cross, Michael. It was because he was so dirty that father—"

"Your father is as cruel as an old wolf!" Michael burst out.

Susan stared at him for a moment. "You scalawag!" she ejaculated, quite forgetting in her indignation that this expression, although her father occasionally used it, did not fall in



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

with her mother's ideas of elegant diction. "How dare you? Such a *lie*! I'll never speak to you again," and Susan turned and dashed back towards the house. Michael was somewhat surprised. Generally it was himself or Nieder who were the aggressors in a quarrel, and Susan who meekly and tearfully mourned their displeasure, and made the first overtures of peace. He and Nieder were graciously pleased to regard her as "a good tempered little thing." Therefore Michael was surprised at this outburst, but he did not care. He did not want to speak any more to a girl who could be consoled for the murder of Mr. Musteed by a piece of green silk for a doll's dress.

He and Nieder played alone in the Rebel's House for the next three days. All its charm was temporarily gone for Michael. The emptiness that had been so delightfully suggestive, so productive of imaginary forms, was cold and dreary and lifeless; from the old sofa, from the soap-box, from the stairs, from

## THE MURDER OF MR. MUSTEED

every window and every empty corner, from the grey dead weeds outside, Mr. Musteed's absence stared him in the face and sent a chill through him. The echo of their voices through the empty rooms, that used to delight him, was ghastly now. Besides, although he would not acknowledge it, he felt the need of Susan. Without her, Nieder could not be engineered smoothly through any more imaginative play than running races, and scuffling and wrestling and having jumping matches off the stairs. All these amusements were fascinating, of course; there was great exhilaration in beating Nieder in a race all round the house and barn together, and in jumping from the fourth step of the stairs halfway across the hall, while Nieder could only jump from the third, and sometimes tumbled. But three days of the same sports became rather monotonous, and whenever Michael tried any play with imaginary people in it, Nieder was intolerably stupid, and generally ended by getting cross. Susan was really no more imaginative than Nie-

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

der, but she was quicker to take up Michael's ideas, and entered enthusiastically into any play that promised dramatic situations, especially if she could figure picturesquely in it. Nieder followed where two led, but was more inclined to assert himself when he had only one playmate; so Michael, although he felt he could never like Susan again whenever he thought of the green silk dress, found himself missing her against his will. Every day he expected to see her coming to make up friends, and every day he was—glad, of course, when she didn't, for he was not at all sure that he would make up friends. And yet—

The third evening, at tea, his father began to inquire into the matter. "Is Susan sick?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Michael.

"I haven't seen her with you lately."

Michael was silent for a few minutes. Then he said briefly:—"We quarrelled."

"Quarrelled? What about?"

"Mr. Musteed."

There was another silence. Then Michael

## THE MURDER OF MR. MUSTEED

said, in a choked voice:—"Her father murdered him."

"What do you mean, Michael?"

Michael set down his cup of chocolate, and burst into sobs.

"He burned him! He took him out of her hand—and burned him up—and her mother gave her green silk for a doll's dress, and that made up—she doesn't care about Mr. Musteed!"

"It's too bad, *a stór!* Was that why you quarrelled with her?"

"Yes. At least, she quarrelled with me first, but I haven't tried to make up friends. She doesn't usually get angry, but I said her father was a cruel old wolf, and she called me a scalawag, and said it was a lie, and she ran away and has never made up friends, and I don't want to. At least—I don't think—"

"Well, Michael, I'm very sorry about Mr. Musteed, and I don't think much of her for being consoled by a piece of green silk, but if you called her father a cruel old wolf, there's something to be said on her side."



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## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"But he *is* a cruel old wolf!"

"Would you like any one to call your father a name like that?"

"I'd knock any one down if he did!"

"Then you shouldn't say it about anybody else's father."

"But you're different from anybody else's father!"

"Susan thinks her father is different, too. It isn't gentlemanly to say unpleasant things to people about their fathers. It isn't what a little Irishman, with the blood of kings in his veins, ought to do, no matter how angry he gets."

"What does having the blood of kings in your veins mean?" demanded Michael excitedly.

"It means that the great-great-great-grand-fathers of the great-great-grandfathers of all Irishmen were kings, because long ago, before the Sacsanaigh came, Ireland was full of kings. Some of them were brave men, that we ought to be proud to have come from."

"Do you mean that I'm the great-great-

## THE MURDER OF MR. MUSTEED

great-grandson of a king?" inquired Michael, with shining eyes. This was wonderful! He had never dreamed he had anything to do with a king.

"Not quite so close a relative as that," his father replied, smiling. "Some king was probably your grandfather, so far back that you couldn't count. When we get so far back as that we don't call them grandfathers—we call them ancestors."

"Was he a brave king?" inquired Michael.

"Very likely. And a little boy with a brave king for an ancestor has no business to be insulting people about their fathers."

"I won't do it again, if the king wouldn't have done it," replied Michael.

"Do you know what I would do to-morrow morning, if I were in your place?" his father inquired.

"What?"

"I would go over to Susan's, and tell her I was sorry for what I said about her father, and make it up."

"Have I got to go?"



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"I was only telling you what I would do in your place."

Somehow, no matter how Michael disliked the thought of doing a thing, he always came round to it after he heard that his father would do it in his place. Many a time this had urged him to the peaceable performance of a distasteful duty, when a command would have meant passionate rebellion. And he was not at all sure that he did altogether dislike the idea of making up friends. Indeed, before he went to sleep, he found, to his great surprise, that he wanted quite badly to see Susan again, although of course he could never like her, after the green silk business. Next morning, when he woke up, he decided to go over; and when he sat down to breakfast he was so anxious to go that he could hardly wait to eat. When he was through he ran over to Susan's as hard as he could pelt, and came panting into the barnyard as Susan was holding a squalling hen for her father to cut its wing. He was surprised that Susan was still the same little red-coated

## THE MURDER OF MR. MUSTEED

figure she had been long ago, before the quarrel.

"Susan, I've come to say I'm sorry I called your father a cruel old wolf, and won't you make up friends?" he asked. He had meant to say, with indifferent dignity:—"Will you make up friends?" But the more coaxing formula and tone had escaped him unawares.

Susan's father looked up quickly, stared, then burst into his boisterous laugh. "Well, you do beat the Dutch!" he exclaimed.

Perhaps that laugh had something to do towards making Susan amenable. "Will you never say it again?" she inquired, with twice the dignity Michael had meant to assume.

"No. He can never murder Mr. Musteed again," replied Michael.

"All right. We'll make up friends," said Susan.

Her father stared and laughed again. It seemed as if he laughed at everything. Michael planted himself before him, with legs well apart and fists involuntarily clenched,

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

and a fire in his eyes that sobered and astonished Susan's father. "Did you think it was funny to murder Mr. Musteed?" he demanded.

"No, I was quite sorry to have to burn the little beggar."

"He wasn't a beggar!"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Susan's father. Being a pious church-goer, he never used any stronger expression than this, but he used it often enough, and vehemently enough, to make up for the ones he didn't use. "You're a regular little spitfire! I'm thankful you're not my kid, you *would* be a handful to manage." Susan's father thus unconsciously reciprocated the sentiments Michael had expressed the Christmas before.

## CHAPTER XIII

### MR. JANE DOVE

THE construction of Jane Dove's new dress took a couple of weeks, and Susan herself had a hand in it. Her mother thought it an excellent way to teach her to sew. Every afternoon she went home early from the Rebel's House, saying with her most important air:—"I must do something at Jane Dove's dress now." At last, one afternoon, she appeared dancing and smiling. "Jane Dove's dress is finished!" she cried.

Michael said nothing. He still could not forgive Susan for her joy over that dress. Nieder remarked indifferently:—"That so?"

"Boys, you *must* come right over and see her in it!" said Susan.

"I'm not going," said Michael.

"Oh, Michael!" said Susan, in a tone of great disappointment.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

Michael started up to the Rebel's House, his head thrown back in a way which Susan knew indicated his least amenable mood.

"You're mean!" she called after him. "Nieder, you'll come, won't you?"

Nieder acquiesced goodnaturedly, but without any special enthusiasm. When they joined Michael at the Rebel's House Susan exclaimed:—"Jane Dove looks so fine in her new dress that I said to Nieder she ought to get married now, and he said she might as well!"

Still stern silence on Michael's part. Nieder inquired indifferently:—"Have you a he for her to get married to?"

"Perhaps Santa Claus will bring me another knittity for Christmas, and then we can have one to play with up here again."

"What's the use of getting another one? Your father would just burn him again," said Michael.

"Oh, I'd try to keep him cleaner."

"No, you wouldn't. You would leave him

## MR. JANE DOVE

lying round in the dirt just the same way you left Mr. Musteed," replied Michael.

"You boys did a lot more to dirty Mr. Musteed than I did. Oh, I want so much to have Jane Dove get married!" said Susan.

"Can't you talk about anything but Jane Dove?" demanded Michael.

"No, I can't—she *is* so beautiful! I'm so anxious to have her get married while her dress is nice and new!"

"Well, she had better marry an invisible man that your father can't burn," said Michael.

"Mr. Musteed was so much nicer than an invisible person. I would like another knittity just like him, but it's a long time till Christmas yet, and I'm in such a *hurry* for her to get married! Michael, do you think you could find a *very* nice man for her in the woods?"

The task of finding a *very* nice man for Jane Dove, whose name he loathed, did not appeal to Michael; but the Rebel's House was sadly in need of a hero, and the thought of an in-

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

visible hero was irresistibly fascinating. After all, there was no reason why Mr. Jane Dove should not be an infinitely more admirable person than his bride, so after some hesitation Michael promised to find him in the woods next morning, and the wedding would, of course, take place as soon as he was found.

"We'll have it up here," Susan said. "I'll bring Jane Dove up in her carriage, and be very careful of her."

Next morning Michael and Nieder were much surprised to encounter Susan all in her Sunday best. "What are you dressed up as if you were going to church for?" inquired Michael.

"People always put on their very nicest clothes when they go to weddings," replied Susan. "You boys haven't dressed up at all! You look like a pair of tramps."

"I'll find a coat made of gold for each of us when I go to the woods, and a golden sword to hang round our middles," said Michael.

Jane Dove was reposing in her carriage, with her golden curls spread out against a

## MR. JANE DOVE

background of white veil, and a wreath of everlasting on her head. Her solemn, vacant wax face was staring up at the sky. Michael looked at her scornfully. So *that* was the thing whose new dress could console Susan for the murder of Mr. Musteed! She didn't deserve a nice man, she deserved a bad one, but as her husband was to help them in all sorts of wonderful deeds, he must be good and brave.

Michael picked up one gold coat under the stump fence, and another a little farther on in the woods, and the swords were lying under a pine log. He had to go a good deal farther along before he saw a pair of legs swinging from a branch. "Hello!" he called.

"Hello!" replied a voice.

"I'm looking for a man to marry Jane Dove," said Michael.

"All right, I'll come," said the invisible man, and jumped down beside Michael.

As they walked back together Michael found the future Mr. Jane Dove to be just the kind of hero he had wanted very badly to know.



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

He had once lived in Ireland and been a patriot, and had run his sword through ten Saesanaigh policemen (he was wearing the sword at present). Then he had gone to sea in a ship called the *Bright Starting Out*, and had rescued a great many people he found drowning, and had tried very hard to get to the North Pole, and had got near enough to see it once. Then he had sailed up the river in the *Bright Starting Out*, and had sailed away off into the wonderful region where the lumbermen lived, and he had seen lions, and shared Michael's ambition to kill one. And—*he had seen fairies!* He had seen them flying backwards and forwards across the river, and once he had seen one in the woods, in the very spot where they were walking now.

"I *knew* they lived here!" cried Michael. "Oh, I want to hear all about them, but we can't wait to talk about them now, because Susan is in such a hurry to get Jane Dove married. You will just have to have patience with Jane Dove. I'm afraid she's an awful stupid."

MR. JANE DOVE

"That doesn't matter," replied the hero, politely.

Susan met them at the door. "Have you got the man?" she inquired.

"Yes, I have, and he is a fine fellow. Nieder, here are your coat and sword."

Susan set Jane Dove up in the carriage, and carefully arranged her veil. "Doesn't she look sweet?" she inquired, kissing her warmly. "My beautiful darling Jane Dove!" Then, turning to Michael, she demanded:—"Where's the man?"

"He's here," said Michael.

"What does he look like?"

"He's tall, and he has curly hair, and he has a sword hanging from his middle that has been through ten Saesanaigh policemen. It is all red yet, though he has washed it several times."

The soap box was standing in the middle of the hall, with Susan's toy tea-set on it, and a bunch of heart's-ease in the centre. This was the festal board, and they all gathered around, sitting on the floor with their knees up to

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

their chins, Jane Dove in her carriage occupying one end. At each place there was a tiny parcel tied with white ribbon, which proved to be a box containing a piece of cake. This was the only tangible viand.

"We're eating tapioca," said Michael, "and we're drinking chocolate." These were his favourite delicacies.

"We're having cauliflower with sauce too," said Susan.

"And we're having a great big pudding," said Nieder, who was capable of a flight of imagination where food was concerned.

After the feast they had a dance, which consisted in jumping about the room till they were tired. Michael delighted in the clanking of the swords, especially Mr. Jane Dove's.

"I guess they're married now," Susan said at last. "I'll take her home. I'm afraid of something happening to her, and mother said not to stay up here in my good clothes."

Mr. Jane Dove proved a very serviceable hero in the months that followed. He had a horse called Black Auster (Michael's father

## MR. JANE DOVE

had finished reading the "Jungle Book" to Michael now, and "Black Beauty" was its successor). Black Auster began by being a replica of Black Beauty, but he grew into a very different sort of creature. Black Beauty's docility and sweetness of temper became glorified, in Black Auster, into an angelic and incredible loveliness of disposition. So marvellously did he radiate goodness, that he had only to look at any wrongdoer "with such a beautiful expression that they stopped at once." He performed the same useful function as the toucan, with its "loud sweet song." Michael had thus early grasped the truth that the most potent reformers in the world are the unconscious ones. In the same way Black Beauty's sagacity was magnified till it reached truly marvellous proportions in Black Auster, and so were his physical beauty and strength. His hair was like silk, his mane flowed almost to the ground; he shone gloriously in the sun, and he had great, soft, shining golden eyes, which exercised the beneficent influence mentioned above. He was so swift that he could carry

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

you away off into the lumbermen's region—right to the very edge of the world, so you could sit on his back and look into the sky—and home again in a single afternoon. At first he galloped over the ground like an ordinary horse, but as his perfections increased he became so light on his feet that he flew through the air, although he was not a winged Pegasus.

## CHAPTER XIV

### "MONARCH OF ALL I SURVEY"

MICHAEL did not find out just how useful Mr. Jane Dove and Black Auster could be, till after Christmas. There was such a bad outbreak of scarlet fever in town that Michael's father made up his mind he would not go there again, even if he ran out of such apparent necessities as flour and sugar. Even Susan's father and mother began to consider the desirability of missing a few Sundays at church, but they considered it a little too late. They went for the last time the Sunday before Christmas. On New Year's day Susan came out as usual to slide downhill, but she got tired, and finally said she had a headache and went home. That afternoon, as Michael was running out of the gate, Susan's father came dashing out of the opposite gate in his sleigh, at

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

such a speed that he and Michael had almost collided before he could turn aside. "Good gracious!" he ejaculated, expressing in this brief and innocuous phrase his consternation at having nearly let his horses' hoofs strike Michael's head. Then he drew up with a jerk.

"Look here, young man, you're not to set foot inside my gate. Susan's sick, and her mother is in a stew for fear it may be the fever." Having flung this out with savage brevity, he lashed up his horses and dashed downhill, very much as if he were in a stew himself.

Michael did not see how he could disturb Susan by going inside the gate, but he obeyed orders, and told Nieder they must keep outside Susan's gate, because she was sick. Nieder himself was very dull this afternoon, and did not slide downhill with anything like Michael's zest. At last he said he was cold, and went home, although Michael begged him to stay. Brian was still left to play with, and Michael made the most of him, but Brian was most unfortunately beginning to make other friends.

### "MONARCH OF ALL I SURVEY"

Strange dogs would insist on hanging about the place, and he sniffed around them, played with them, sometimes seemed half inclined to fight, but always showed a lively enough interest to encourage them to come again. Old Colquhoun shook his head over this. "Ilka dog should be like ma Jessie, and ha'e nae friend but his master," he often said.

On this particular afternoon several of Brian's friends appeared while Michael was racing him downhill, and he ran off at once with them. Michael followed, whistling, calling, begging him to come back and play with him when he had neither Susan nor Nieder, but Brian trotted steadily on along the river road, his plump tail at half-mast, his ears pricked up alertly, absorption in some urgent business expressed in every line of his body. Michael finally went home feeling hurt and sore and cross, utterly forsaken and deserted. The sun was going down, and it seemed a big, cold, lonely world.

Next morning Brian had not come back, and Michael's father came in with the news that



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

Susan was very sick with scarlet fever, and he must not go over there. He went down to see Nieder after breakfast, but just as he got in the gate Nieder's mother appeared at the door, and shouted:—"Go back! Go back! Do not come in here!"

"Why?" asked Michael.

"Nieder has the fever, and you must not come here."

For a few days Michael was a lonely creature, and did not know what to do with himself. He followed his father about the house and stable, and went over every day to see old Colquhoun. Day after day passed, and Brian did not come back. The lonely feeling was dreadful, was worse than being hungry, and there was the same sort of emptiness with it. The only way he could get any relief was by sticking close to his father, or talking with old Colquhoun. Every morning he and his father went down to the gate, and shouted out to Susan's father to know how Susan was, and for a great many mornings Susan's father replied savagely that she was no better.

## "MONARCH OF ALL I SURVEY"

But after several days of loneliness Michael remembered Mr. Jane Dove and Black Auster. One morning his father put him on Fionn's back, and led him from the stable to the house, then down to the gate, down the hill, and back again. Tha' was rapture for Michael. He loved horses. The very smell of the harness thrilled him with delight. To be up on the back of one, to feel the great body moving under him, to press the warm sides with his legs, was a taste of bliss, but it was all too brief a taste. "Oh, I'd like to *really* ride, and do it all day!" he cried as his father lifted him down.

Just then Mr. Jane Dove appeared on Black Auster. "I'm going on a hunting trip to the lumberman country," he said. "Would you like to come? Black Auster's so strong, he can carry both of us."

Michael jumped up at once on Black Auster, in front of Mr. Jane Dove, and took the reins in his hands. In an instant Black Auster had leaped from the ground and was bounding through the air, his great mane flowing splen-

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

didly in the wind, his warm body throbbing with life between Michael's legs—and all this wonderful power was completely in his control. It was the perfection of the brief, imperfect taste of bliss he had just had. Michael's father wondered why he was galloping off across the field without any apparent purpose, not knowing that he was rapidly leaving the whole familiar scene behind, and entering the unknown land the river came from. Presently, in the distance, they saw a lion. It looked very big and grand, and its tawny hide was distinct on the white snow. Michael felt a wild thrill of excitement shoot through him from his chest to his feet, and Mr. Jane Dove clanked his sword. "We'll get that fellow," he said. "Have you got your gun?"

"Yes," said Michael. "And I've got my sword too."

The lion roared just then. It was an awful noise, bigger than the noise of a train. Michael patted Black Auster's neck to encourage him to be still swifter and braver than he al-

### "MONARCH OF ALL I SURVEY"

ready was, and whispered:—"Do your best, old Auster."

He had absorbed "Black Beauty" into the very marrow of his bones, as he had absorbed the "Jungle Book," and consequently Black Auster never felt the whip, nor heard harsh words. They were soon within shooting distance of the lion. Michael pulled the trigger, the gun went off with an awful bang, and the lion roared so loud that everything was swallowed up in the noise, and sprang right on them. It knocked Michael off on one side, and Mr. Jane Dove on the other, but Black Auster was so strong that by bracing himself with all four legs he managed to stand firm, although the lion landed right on top of him. Mr. Jane Dove and Michael scrambled to their feet, and each stuck a sword into the lion just as it was preparing to gobble up the brave Black Auster, who would rather be eaten than desert his masters. Then they patted and praised Black Auster, and skinned the lion the way Mowgli skinned Sheer Khan, and rode home triumphantly with his hide.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

Next morning Susan's father, with a more genial countenance than he had worn for some days, announced that Susan was a little better. "Michael, she wanted to know if you and Nieder had it," he said, "and when I told her you were alone in your glory, she said she hoped you weren't awfully lonely."

"Tell her I'm not a bit lonely!" Michael shouted back, benevolently anxious to set her mind at rest. "Tell her Mr. Jane Dove and I killed a lion yesterday."

Many were the exploits Michael and Mr. Jane Dove had in the lumberman country during the weeks that followed. They had wild chases after wolves and jackals, in which all Black Auster's swiftness was needed, and they had fights with tigers and bears, and one day Michael caught a wild horse, with which he had a desperate tussle. It threw him every time he tried to get on its back, and when he tried to hold it with a rope it dragged him along the ground, and he had to call Mr. Jane Dove to his assistance, and the two of them together could barely keep their feet when it pranced

## "MONARCH OF ALL I SURVEY"

and kicked and struggled to get away. They could never have managed it at all if Black Auster had not been there to subdue it periodically with his beautiful eyes. Michael, however, never forgot that kind words and pats (at the rare intervals when it was still enough to pat) would conquer in the end. He named this horse Hotspur, and when he got tired of Black Auster's perfection (although he never put it that way, even to himself) he rode on Hotspur, and had wild struggles, generally ending in a runaway, and being rescued by Mr. Jane Dove and Black Auster. Then, when he thought it was his turn to be the hero, he gave Mr. Jane Dove over to Hotspur's tender mercies, and he and Black Auster accomplished some marvellous rescues. Sometimes the situation was further complicated by the arrival of a bear or a tiger on the scene in the midst of a struggle with Hotspur. Then there was general heroism. Michael saved Mr. Jane Dove and Black Auster from the very jaws of the wild beast, and Mr. Jane Dove saved Michael and Black Auster, and Black Auster

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

saved Michael and Mr. Jane Dove, and they all saved Hotspur, and Hotspur tried his best to kick and trample them all at once, and the wild beast tried his best to eat them all one after the other; and any tangle that could not be straightened out by swords and guns and heroism always yielded instantly to Black Auster's beautiful eyes. But Black Auster was considerate enough to refrain from using his beautiful eyes till Michael and Mr. Jane Dove had had full scope for their heroism. When, in addition to all this, it is recorded that they went to sea in the *Bright Starting Out*, and could only by constant watchfulness and prompt action save themselves from being engulfed in the deep, it will be seen that Michael's life by no means lacked excitement during those weeks of solitude, when he tumbled around in the snow in such an utterly wild and senseless manner. But there were quiet intervals between the adventures—when the sea was calm and they could stand side by side at the mast of their ship, or when they were

## "MONARCH OF ALL I SURVEY"

riding quietly home on Black Auster and Hotspur, laden with hides and bear-steaks—and then they had long, delightful talks about everything. Mr. Jane Dove was as good a companion as he was a hero. With him, Michael discussed all the mysteries that filled him with such curiosity. There was the way you grew, for instance. He had remarked once before Susan's father how wonderful that was, and he had burst out laughing. But Mr. Jane Dove wondered over it with Michael, and had thought about it as often. Then, he was as much interested in fairies, and knew a lot about them. He told Michael that the little stars on the snow were the fairies' old clothes that they had thrown away, and this gave Michael some idea of the splendour of their apparel. He tried hard to show them to Michael, but it was always when Michael was not around that he saw them. Once he pulled up Black Auster in a hurry and said:—"Look! Look! There is one flying across in front of us!" But it flew so fast that by the



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

time Michael looked it was gone. That was the nearest Michael ever came to seeing a fairy.

Nieder was never very sick—indeed, he got off so easily that the doctor denied him the dignity of having scarlet fever at all, and called it scarlatina. His careful mother, however, took as many precautions as if it had been the real thing, and although he was able to run about the house in a few days, he was quarantined for the regulation eight weeks. However, Michael could stand at the gate and wave to him, and every night he wrote an account of his adventures with Mr. Jane Dove, usually illustrated, tied it to a little stone, and threw it as near the window Nieder appeared at as it would go. Then Nieder's face broke into a broad smile, and his mother ran out and picked up the note and brought it in.

Week after week passed, and Brian did not come back. Michael's father used to stretch himself lazily after meals, and say:—"Ach aidhe! If only Brian would come back, and

## "MONARCH OF ALL I SURVEY"

pick up the crumbs for us!" The one form of housework he never could reconcile himself to was sweeping. He loved cooking, and he didn't mind mending, although it was so hard to make the mends look nice, but the only time Michael ever saw him cross was when he had to sweep. He loved to shock old Colquhoun, who was a scrupulous sweeper, by expounding the theory that as long as you left dust undisturbed it did you no harm. "But, mon! It's *there*," old Colquhoun would exclaim, wrinkling up his face in horrified disgust.

"Well, what does that matter, as long as it doesn't do you any harm?" inquired Michael's father.

"Losh!" exclaimed old Colquhoun, breathless with horror. "It does your soul harm to leave it there," he added with awful severity. Then Michael's father laughed like a mischievous boy, and old Colquhoun's face wrinkled up in spite of him.

At last, one morning when Michael was throwing his account of yesterday's adventures

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

to Nieder, Brian and one of his friends came running along the river road. As soon as Brian saw Michael he quietly separated from the friend, and followed Michael home, to his great joy. He had been away just three weeks, Michael gathered from his father's conversations with old Colquhoun.

It was five weeks longer before the three playmates met again. Nieder was allowed outdoors a few days before he was out of quarantine, and he and Michael could carry on a conversation at shouting distance. "Say, Michael, those Mr. Jane Dove stories were fine," were his first words. He had been having a dull and lonely enough time to be glad of even imaginary adventures.

"You don't look a bit sick," replied Michael. "Susan has been awfully sick."

"You might as well be good and sick while you're at it," said Nieder. "It's some fun when you're in bed. They made a great fuss at first, and gave me big white candies for my throat, and then I got well, but I had to stay in the house and not play with any of my

### "MONARCH OF ALL I SURVEY"

good toys because I was having scarlatina, but still I didn't have any more nice things than if I was a well person. It's mean to have scarlatina and not be good and sick."

This point of view was incomprehensible to Michael. It was an unbearable humiliation to him to be sick in bed, and all the attendant sympathy and petting could not compensate for the loss of liberty.

Nieder got out of quarantine a day before Susan, and the two boys had a most joyful time scuffling and racing and sliding downhill, and carrying on till they were fairly helpless with laughter.

Susan and Michael had been eager to meet, but when they met they could think of no better way of celebrating the event than by staring solemnly at each other, without saying a word. At last Michael inquired, in awe-struck tones:—"Did you change your skin like the boy in town?"

"Yes, every bit of it," replied Susan proudly.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"Your legs are awfully long. You look like a stork."

"I grew an awful lot," said Susan, in the same proud tone, as if scarlet fever and all its attendant circumstances were a wonderful achievement. "I've outgrown all my dresses. Mother has to go right to work and make new ones. Father says I'm a guy, and he can't take me to church till mother finishes the new dresses." (Susan gave a joyful skip at this point.) "Did Nieder grow too?"

"He didn't get nearly as tall as you. He's as fat as a pig."

"Was he as sick as me?"

"No, he wasn't very sick. He has been running around outside lately, but we couldn't get at each other till yesterday. Your clothes smell so funny, Susan."

"That's the disaffection."

"What is disaffection?"

"It's the stuff that's put all over everything after you have been sick. Father and mother have been putting it all over everything for a week."

"MONARCH OF ALL I SURVEY"

Just then Nieder came along, and the three started sliding downhill as if nothing had ever happened to break their happy fellowship.

## CHAPTER XV

### BRIAN

UP to this time, Brian had been a joy and pride both to Michael and his father; now he became their trouble and their torment. He never stayed away for three weeks again, but he went away nearly every night, and sometimes stayed for several days. He was well scolded when he came home; Michael had some painful moments when he came in and heard his father saying in awful tones:—"Shame on you, bad, bad dog!" and saw Brian crouching down, a quivering yellow mass of shame, and knew he must not say a word to protect him, because it was too sadly true that he deserved reproach. Tam kept pace with Brian in mischief as in everything else, and was often away at the same time. They were still deadly enemies, and one day when the children were up

## BRIAN

at the Rebel's House they heard awful growls and yelps in the woods. "It's Brian and Tam!" cried Michael, and dashed out into the woods as hard as he could go. There was deep, soft snow, but he floundered through it somehow, Nieder after him.

"Oh, we must hurry! We must *hurry!*" he cried. "They'll kill each other! Father—and old Colquhoun—said they would!"

The noises became more and more awful, and he thought they would never struggle through that snow and get to them. At last, trembling and hot and exhausted, he came upon the combatants. One was on top, with the hair bristling all along his back and neck, and Michael thought he was actually eating the other up. *Which* one was it? He gave one last struggle forward, caught the dog's tail, and, not having strength to tug, fell backwards into the snow. The dog was forced to let go, and proved to be Brian. Tam rolled over feebly, and sat up. He was bleeding at the neck.

"Nieder, you take him to old Colquhoun's,



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

and I'll bring Brian home," said Michael. Brian, bristling and growling, tried to spring on Tam again, and it took all the strength of both boys to hold him. Susan, meanwhile, had run home to her father with the news that Brian and Tam were fighting in the woods, and that the boys had run off to them and she thought they were going to be killed. He had said:—"Good gracious!" and started off, and now he arrived on the scene. "Well, this is a pretty mess! Michael, that dog of yours is going to get you into enough trouble before you're done with him. He ought to be shot!" With this soothing speech, he reached down his hand between the two boys to grab Brian, but Michael struck it roughly away. "Don't you touch him!" he cried.

"Look here. I'm not going to stand treatment like this," said Susan's father, really angry.

"I'm sorry I struck you. But I won't have any one talk that way about Brian!" cried Michael, crimson with rage and exertion.

## BRIAN

"Well, he's done for that dog of old Colquhoun's."

"Do you mean Tam will die?" cried Michael.

"Of course he will. He can't live with a wound like that in his neck."

"Take him home. He is not to die here, and we can't let go of Brian," said Michael.

"I have something else to do than carry home old Colquhoun's dying dogs for him," said Susan's father. But fortunately his deeds were more gracious than his words, as they could well afford to be. He went and got old Colquhoun, and between them they bathed and bandaged Tam, and brought him home. Susan's father, with his usual kindly tact, had magnified the gravity of the situation. Tam was very badly hurt, but he had a good chance of recovery, and he did recover. Old Colquhoun nursed him conscientiously, but without emotion, for Tam was becoming more distasteful to him all the time. "He canna get into ony mischief for twa ooks at

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

least, and that is a great relief, sae dinna fash yoursel'," he said to Michael's father, when the latter was expressing the utmost distress over the occurrence.

"It wasn't Jessie, anyway," said Michael.

"Na. Puir auld Jessie, it is to her ye should mak' these handsome speeches. She'll no leave Tam's side, I maun even bring her her meals there."

"Is that why she didn't come over here with you?" Michael inquired.

"Yes. She wouldna visit onybody the noo. I open the door and say:—'Come, Jessie, will ye no come oot wi' me for a walk?' and she looks at me wi' her grave e'en, and says as plain as words:—'Ha'e ye nae heart, that ye can speak o' sic things?'"

In a couple of weeks Tam was as well as ever, but the hair never grew where the wound had been. There was a long bare streak in his white shirt front. This was the one mark by which a stranger could have told the two dogs apart.

Brian was carefully watched now, but still

## BRIAN

he got away much oftener than was desirable. One morning in the spring Susan's father came over with his most savage aspect. "Look here," he said to Michael's father, not even waiting to say good morning, "this isn't going to do. A pack of dogs got in among my sheep last night, and ran them down, and I'm going to lose two in consequence. That dog of yours was among them. It was moonlight, and I saw him."

"Are you sure it was my dog?" inquired Michael's father. He had no wish to accuse Tam, but he could not help feeling it an injustice to Brian that they looked so alike when Tam was so much the worse of the two, and his hot Irish blood was stirred by the tone Susan's father saw fit to use.

"Yes, I'm sure. I saw him, I tell you."

"Very well. I'll pay for your sheep," said Michael's father shortly.

"If I were you, I'd shoot that dog. He'll land you in trouble yet," said Susan's father as he took his departure.

"I am not going to shoot my dog," retorted

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

Michael's father, with great distinctness and decision.

When old Colquhoun heard of this he was indignant. "It was Tam!" he said. "It was never your laddie. It was I wha should ha'e paid for the sheep. That dog will cost me dear yet. If Jessie was no sae fond o' him, I'd send him awa' to-morrow."

"He declared it was my dog," said Michael's father.

"It was no your dog, and I'll gae mysel' and tell him sae," said old Colquhoun. He did so, and was advised to shoot his dog. And in spite of all he could say, Susan's father clung to the idea that it was Brian.

"That mon's head canna haud mair than ane thocht at a time, and ye canna get it oot wi' a pickaxe," old Colquhoun burst out to Michael's father afterwards, and Michael suddenly burst into a wild shout of laughter, that was positively demonish in its appreciative glee. His antagonism to Susan's father had increased since the sheep episode, for since then Brian had been kept a close prisoner, and this was

## BRIAN

more than Michael could stand. He could not bear to see the beautiful creature that loved so to race and romp and roll about on the grass, shut up in the house day after day, and only let out when he and his father were both around, watching every movement and ready to call him back if he even looked toward the road. One day Michael's father tried the experiment of chaining him in the yard, but in a very few minutes he was forcibly convinced that the proud spirit of Brian Boroinhe would never bend to that. He jerked backwards, squealing and struggling in such a wild frenzy that neither Michael nor his father dared approach, and when he finally got his head out of the collar, ran down cellar and could not be coaxed up for the rest of the day. It was after this episode that the first cold, awful shadow of an approaching calamity came over Michael. One day after dinner, when Brian was picking up the crumbs, his father remarked:—"Michael, do you know what I would do with Brian if he were my dog?"

"What?" asked Michael.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"I would find some kind people with a nice place, where there are no sheep around, and where he could be free all the time, and give him to them."

"I won't give Brian to anybody!" cried Michael, so passionately that his father said nothing more. But although Michael fought fiercely against the idea of ever giving Brian up for anybody or anything, although it was a calamity too black and awful to be believed in, he knew, underneath all this rebellion, that it would come to pass as surely as the sun rose and set, once his father had said:—"I would do it if he were my dog." He had come to love Brian more passionately, the wilder and more intractable he became. It was his nature to love whatever was wild and beautiful and hard to subdue, and when he found that Brian could not bear the chain his fellow feeling was stronger than ever. It was his nature, also, to cling to his friends with the more defiant tenacity the deeper they sank into trouble, the more they were blamed, and the more earnestly cooler headed people tried to loosen the

## BRIAN

bond. It was his nature to fly hotly and furiously in the face of whoever attempted to interfere between him and the beloved object (unless, with the utmost gentleness and tact, his father essayed the task), and the more trouble and heartache it gave him, the stronger his love grew. All these traits developed in Michael during the hot, unhappy, angry months when he took his stand by Brian, disgraced and imprisoned, against the world.

Old Colquhoun was the only person who poured balm on his sore and burning sensibilities by persistent faith in Brian's innocence. "He never did it," he reiterated. "He may be wild, but there are things I could trust him no to do as I could trust ma ain Jessie. He never ran doon sheep, and he never will."

Tam was kept chained now, and took kindly enough to it. He sat up for tidbits whenever anybody approached his kennel, and grew fat and sleek and lazy. Brian, too, sobered down as the summer advanced and the weather grew hot. He got so quiet that he could be trusted out all day, and Michael and his father began



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

to enjoy him again. But just as they were beginning to forget all their troubles in this period of peace, they began again. Brian suddenly took to his old restless ways once more, without any warning, and about the same time Tam took to breaking his chain. Then Susan's father started to complain of harried sheep, and the old miserable business of shutting up and watching Brian had to be begun once more. But in spite of all their care he kept breaking away, and one morning Susan's father came over with the news that a sheep had been killed, and Lick (the hired boy) had seen the dog do it, and declared it was Brian.

"Ma dog has been awa' for three days," old Colquhoun, who happened to be there, broke in. "I tell ye it was ma dog. He'd stop at naething!"

"There is no way of telling, except by the scar," said Michael's father.

"The best thing to do would be to shoot them both," Susan's father replied.

"One dog or the other will be disposed of, but not both," replied Michael's father. "And

## BRIAN

kindly understand this, once and for all. I am not going to shoot my dog, for you or any man!"

"It beats me how you can be so stuck on the brute. But come over now with me, and I'll ask Dick, before you, if the dog had a scar on the front of his neck. Then you'll be satisfied."

"As you have informed me at different times that Dick is a scalawag and a fool, I can't be expected to trust much to his evidence. But I suppose I shall have to take it, such as it is."

Dick, whose countenance resembled that of an imbecile mink, said he didn't know as the dog had a scar. When questioned more closely, he expressed a readiness to swear to it that the dog had no scar. So Michael's father paid for the sheep, and went home sorrowful, angry, and unconvinced.

That afternoon, as Michael was feeding a brood of chickens, his father came and stood over them, looking down at them absently and very gravely. "Michael, there is no help for

## THE GLAY AND THE DREAM

it—when Brian comes back he will have to be sent away,” he said.

Michael's grief was deep and bitter. When he saw Susan's father coming over that evening, he stood and glared at him without speaking, and would not go in while he was there. But he heard something, through the open door, that gave the final edge to his resentment. “If he feels so cut up about it as all that, why not say you're just lending Brian, and let him think he will get him back some day? It'll wear off after awhile, and he will forget all about the brute.”

Michael ran down to the barn, even his sorrow temporarily swallowed up in rage. “He thinks I'm a boy to be *lied* to!” he broke out to Mr. Jane Dove, stamping his foot on the floor and clenching his hands. “He thinks I'll forget Brian! I'll *never* forget him!” He suddenly broke out into passionate sobs.

“You can have Black Auster whenever you want to go and see him,” said Mr. Jane Dove.

“But it wouldn't be *really* seeing him! He might be dead while I was playing I was see-

## BRIAN

ing him!" This was the first time imagination had ever failed to console. It was a small, but significant incident in Michael's development, and showed that all this pain and passion was sweeping him, slowly but surely, out from "the glory and the dream" of childhood, into the merciless realities of grown-up life.

"I wish I was big enough to knock Susan's father down!" he broke out presently. "I'm going to have it out with him as soon as I'm big, if he isn't too old then."

Perhaps the method Susan's father adopted of being conciliating was no more graceful than his manner of being aggressive, but he really meant well to-night. He saw Michael's father had been ruffled, and as he liked him, he thought he would try now to "smooth him down." He had a cousin who lived in a town a great many miles away, with whom he was plainly not on the friendliest terms, and he implied that it would give him great satisfaction to be the means of getting this cousin saddled with Brian. This was his method of smoothing Michael's father down. He described the

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

cousin as "a shiftless milksop," but said he was fond of animals and would be good to the brute, his tone implying that this weakness stamped his cousin's order of intellect. He finally got the authority of Michael's father to write to him and arrange about Brian.

So Brian was sent off a week later. He had to be put in a harness with a chain fastened to it, and it was dreadful to Michael to see him so for the last time. They had a long, sad drive to town. Michael cared for nothing he saw or heard along the wild, alluring road, for he was sitting in the back of the waggon, with his arms around Brian's neck (he would not hold him by the chain). At the station a man came up and remarked what a fine collie they had there, and Michael was choked with tears as he remembered how proud and joyful that would have made him in the old happy days that were all over now. Then the train came in, and Brian was led into the dark baggage car and chained there.

They drove back at dusk into their own yard, where no beautiful Brian would ever bound

## BRIAN

over the grass again. Everything was comfortless and lonely and silent. The tears ran down Michael's cheeks as he tried to choke down his tea, with no Brian waiting to pick up the crumbs. There was an intolerable stillness and emptiness everywhere he had been used to see the beloved yellow form, with its white ruff, alert ears and lovely waving tail.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CLEARED

MICHAEL and his father passed two lonely, eventless weeks after that. Michael never went over to old Colquhoun's, for he could not bear to see Tam. The latter still continued to break his chain. One afternoon, Susan's father and Dick were picking up apples near the sheep pasture, when they heard the terrified bleating that meant dogs. "Good gracious!" said Susan's father, and started for the pasture on the run, Dick after him. They got there just in time to see Tam kill a sheep, with the dexterity of an old hand.

"That's the dog I saw that evening before," said Dick.

"What do you mean?" demanded Susan's father. "You told me that dog had no scar."

"Oh yes, it had."

## CLEARED

"What did you mean by telling such a lie?"

"Please, sir, I thought you wanted me to say it hadn't no sear," cringed Dick.

"You young idiot, I wanted you to tell the truth, and if I catch you at such a lie again I'll fire you."

Susan's father marched straight over to see Michael's father, and tell him what had happened. "Now, if you want that dog of yours back, I've no doubt my cousin will take old Colquhoun's instead of him," he said.

Meanwhile Michael was wandering forlornly about the yard, with no heart to join his playmates in the Rebel's House, or even to summon that other playmate who never had been neglected before. There had been no hunting trips to the lumberman country since Brian's departure. There had been several passionate conversations with Mr. Jane Dove, and the latter had vowed vengeance on Susan's father; but Michael's eyes suddenly became opened wide to the unsatisfactory nature of imaginary vengeance on a very tangible foe. Mr. Jane



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

Dove's wonderful sword was powerless to deal with a situation that demanded a pair of powerful human fists; and it would be many years before the fists would be big and powerful enough to deal with it.

As Michael was wandering about the yard, hot and sore and lonely, he heard a dog galloping and panting behind him. He turned round, startled and bewildered, and in another moment the dog had sprung upon him with such force that he was knocked over on his back, and the animal stood over him licking his face. He managed to scramble to his feet, and force the dog to stand back to be scrutinized. "Brian!" he cried, and then the boy and dog rolled over and over on the grass, kissing and embracing and crying over one another.

"Father will *never* send you away again after this!" he kept assuring Brian and himself.

Brian was a sadly altered dog. The harness that had fitted him when he went away was still on, but he was so thin that it hung loose and rattled with every movement. The white

## CLEARED

shirt front hung in grey ropes of mud, his coat was a mass of burrs, and all along his back coarse black hairs had grown. "Was it because you felt so black inside that those hairs grew on you?" Michael had asked him, and indeed this was the only explanation that was ever found for them.

After he and Michael had spent about twenty minutes making a fuss over each other, he went to the hens' pan and took a long, long drink; then Michael, thinking from his terrible thinness that he had not had a bite to eat since he went away, started to the house to get him something, but suddenly remembered that Susan's father was there. Whatever happened, he must not know that Brian had come back. He would say the dog ought to be shot, and force his father to send him away again. There was a wild, delicious excitement in the thought of hiding him from Susan's father. It was like a story, which wouldn't be over soon, either. It would have to be kept up all his life. Michael laughed gleefully under his breath as he thought of the great times they would have

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

keeping their secret. There would be all the exhilaration of warfare about it, Susan's father being such a deadly enemy. It would be something like having a patriot for a friend and hiding him from a Saesanach policeman. As he neared the house he heard the rough, jerky tones that sounded so savage and bloodthirsty to his excited and hostile imagination. He crept down the cellar steps, saying to himself triumphantly that his feet on the stones didn't make the least bit of noise, and neither did Brian's, as he followed. He lifted the latch of the door with the most care, and pushed it open so cautiously that it barely creaked—it "just whispered a creak," and Susan's father was laughing just then in his "horrid savage way," and couldn't possibly hear the sound. He didn't attempt to shut it again, but stole in. Brian's harness rattled, and had to be held so it wouldn't. He crept over to the milk shelf. Just then Mr. Jane Dove appeared, and opened his mouth to exclaim at the sight of Brian, but Michael lifted a warning hand, and pointed to the floor.

## CLEARED

"He got back, but we must keep *him* from knowing," he whispered.

Mr. Jane Dove nodded entire comprehension, and put his hand on his sword in a grimly suggestive manner. "If he ever gets at Brian, he'll find out something about this," he whispered.

"Yes," said Michael thoughtfully. "But you couldn't *really* save him."

Mr. Jane Dove accepted this snub meekly, although he might well have been surprised. "Really" was a startling innovation in Michael's vocabulary.

Just then Michael's eye fell on half a tongue that stood on the end of the row of milk pans. Nieder's mother had brought it over a few nights before, and his father had been very much pleased.

"I wonder if father would mind if I gave him this," he whispered to Mr. Jane Dove. "It's the only thing I can get for him, except milk, while *he's* in the house."

Just then Brian sat up for it, looking hungrier than Michael had ever felt in his life.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"I'm sure your father would give it to him if he knew he had come back about a hundred miles, and hadn't had a bite to eat all the time," replied Mr. Jane Dove.

So the tongue was fed to Brian, who gobbled it ravenously, and then Michael stole out, holding the smallest pan of milk against himself with one hand, and Brian's harness with the other. When he got to the head of the cellar steps Brian stood up on his hind legs and began to drink out of the pan as he held it, so he set it down, although he had meant to carry it to the safe seclusion of the stable. As soon as Brian was done drinking he tried to bring him there, but the dog flopped down on the ground and would not stir, although Michael stroked his head, "to thaw him out," as he used to do when he wanted to make him follow anywhere. But he was utterly exhausted, and fell sound asleep, where Susan's father could not fail to see him as soon as he came out. Michael was in wretchedness for a few minutes; then he went to the woodpile and got a big box, and dragged it over and put it between Brian and

## CLEARED

the door. Then he settled happily down on the grass, and tried to take off the harness. The buckles were stiff with rust, and he had to cut it with his penknife. Then he began taking out the burrs. His very tail (that beautiful, plummy tail) was matted with them. He did not look the least bit like Michael's Brian, but Michael did not care, so long as he had him safe. He was full of peace and contentment as he sat there in the warm afternoon sun, gently and patiently taking out the burrs. Mr. Jane Dove sat on the box and talked. "The best thing for you and your father to do," he said, "would be to build a great, high tower, with no doors or windows in it, and a way of getting in underground that no one could know about. The roof could be flat, and he could run round up there all day, and come down into the other part at night. Of course there would have to be a high fence round the roof, so that *he* couldn't see Brian. Then on Sundays, when *he* is at church, you could bring him down and give him a beautiful time all day."

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

They had been there a long time, laying plans of concealment, when "*he*" came out. Michael crouched down behind the box, but his father began to say something, and in an instant Brian awoke, pricked up his ears, and had bounded over the box before the horrified Michael could stop him. He stood up on his hind legs and actually put his arms around Michael's father's neck, while Michael, with set, defiant jaw and fiery eyes, squared up to Susan's father. "I wasn't going to let you know he was back. I was trying to hide him," he said. "But now you've seen him, I don't care what you say, or what you do, I'm not going to let you make my father send him away again."

"It was all a mistake, Mike," said Susan's father. "But good gracious, how did he ever get back?"

"He's just skin and bone," said Michael's father, with tears in his eyes. "Oh, Brian, if you had killed all the sheep in the country, I could never send you away again!"

"I knew you wouldn't!" cried Michael.

## CLEARED

"Gimme your paw, Brian. I beg your pardon for accusing you of that dirty trick," said Susan's father.

But Brian was too much absorbed in his master to pay any attention to apologies from Susan's father, so the latter turned to Michael, holding out his hand. "Look here, Mike, I hope it's all right now," he said.

"Did you find out he didn't do it?" asked Michael.

"Yes, I saw that other one at it with my own eyes, and Dick was fool enough to own up that he lied."

"I knew he did. Susan never believes anything he says."

"Too bad Brian had a trip for nothing. However, he's seen the world now, and can talk big to his friends. Say, Mike, is it all right, and shall we let bygones be bygones?"

"Yes," said Michael, beaming as he had never beamed on Susan's father before. He was so happy that he felt at charity with the whole world.

"I'll go over to old Colquhoun's now, and



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

settle about his dog; I'm sure my cousin would rather have him, scar and all, than the sort of scarecrow yours is now."

"We're going to give him lots to eat, and take out all those burrs, and he will get just as beautiful as ever again," retorted Michael hotly. "Won't he, Father?" he added anxiously, when Susan's father was out of hearing.

"I hope so. But he is sadly run down, and it will take a long time to get him back to what he was. To think of what he must have suffered, and all because of that little *ámadán*! I'd like to have the thrashing of him. However, it's over, and Susan's father is really sorry about it—so remember, Michael, we must let bygones be bygones."

Brian had his old place under the tea-table that night, and was fed with the choicest morsels from both plates without being given the trouble of sitting up for them, and after tea he picked up the crumbs in his old dainty way. Michael and his father had just settled down on the doorstep, with him between them, and

## CLEARED

begun on the burrs again, when old Colquhoun and Jessie came over. Brian sprang up and made a great fuss over them both; old Colquhoun responded warmly, but, to Michael's great surprise, Jessie did not. She only endured the caresses with patient dignity, and settled down in her usual still, stately way by her master's side.

"Surely she hasn't forgotten Brian?" said Michael.

"Na, na. But she's getting too auld to care. I'm thinkin' she'll no miss Tam as she would ha'e done a few ooks ago. Weel, I'm glad Brian's cleared. I kenned he was innocent. Puir, leal auld laddie, when I heard what he'd done the tears ran oot o' ma e'en, and I ha'e nae doot that auld bletherskate ca's me the noo by his favourite pet name for Dick."

"I suppose you're glad to get rid of Tam," said Michael's father.

"I could dance wi' joy if I wasna ower auld," replied Colquhoun.

"But perhaps he will come back in the same touching manner," said Michael's father.

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"Catch him! He'll bide wherever there's guid farin' and a saft bed. I canna feel that he's Jessie's ain flesh and bluid."

. . . . .

That night Brian would sleep nowhere but on the floor beside Michael's bed, and as it was understood between Michael and his father that he was to have everything he wanted, and do exactly as he pleased, at least till he got some flesh on his bones and recovered enough spirit to be naughty sometimes, he did not experience much difficulty in carrying out this wish. Michael's father, much as he hated sweeping, brought in a generous armful of straw for him to lie on, and last thing before going to sleep Michael put down his hand and felt for him, and Brian put up his mouth and kissed it. Then they fell asleep, the most thoroughly happy and contented boy and dog on the riverside.

## CHAPTER XVII

### "THE SENSE OF TEARS IN MORTAL THINGS"

NEXT morning Brian, having devoted several hours of the night to his sadly neglected person, was a much more cheerful spectacle. The burrs were nearly all gone, and so was the mud (some of it had been shaken over Michael's counterpane). The fluffy yellow hair and white shirt front that had been Michael's pride were recovering some of their lost loveliness. He was unwilling to be separated a moment from either of his masters, but when he had to choose between them he chose Michael. The latter was sitting on the doorstep petting him after breakfast, when something bright at his feet caught his attention. It proved to be what he called "a silver beauty—" a fifty cent piece.

"*Maiseadh!*" exclaimed his father when he saw it. "That must have leaked out of old

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

Colquhoun's pocket. Talk about thrifty Scotchmen! We Irishmen could do no worse than that. It's a pity he is not as particular about holes in his pockets as he is about dust in his house. Run right over with it, Michael, or he will be gone with Tam."

"Brian will follow me," said Michael.

"I'll keep him," said his father.

Michael started off running and jumping, happy and gay and eager to tell old Colquhoun that Brian was beginning to get beautiful again. He burst joyfully into the lumberman's song as he came in the gate. Old Colquhoun was sitting out in front, in a little rustic chair he had made out of the stump of a tree. He was bent over with his head on his hand, but when he heard Michael singing he came quickly down the path towards him. "Oh, laddie, I'm glad o' ye," he said in a queer choked voice. Michael looked up into his face, and saw, to his great surprise, that he was crying.

"Old Colquhoun—what is the matter?" he asked.

## TEARS IN MORTAL THINGS

"It's juist ma auld lassie. She had to gae—sometime."

"Do you mean that Jessie—Jessie—" Michael could not say the ugly word that was in his mind. Surely, surely nothing so dreadful could have happened as for Colquhoun to be without his old dog.

"She's deid." Colquhoun said it as if it hurt him so much that he could not say anything more.

Michael stood still in front of him, unable to say a word. He had only felt his own joys and sorrows hitherto; now he felt old Colquhoun's grief in his own heart, and he felt sorrier than he had ever been about anything else in his life before, even Brian. It hurt and hurt, like the night his father read out to him about Black Beauty seeing a dead horse drawn past in a cart, and hoping it was Ginger; but it hurt worse than that. He could not bear that old Colquhoun should feel as he had felt about Brian, only so much worse, because Jessie could never come back. He wanted so badly to do something to comfort him, and yet

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

he could not think of anything—he could not even think of anything to say.

“She deed easily,” old Colquhoun went on after a long time. “I maun be thankfu’ for that. After we cam’ hame last nicht, she cam’ in wi’ me as she always does,” (Michael’s eyes filled with tears at the unconscious use of the present tense) “but when I spread her bed in the kitchen she wouldna lie doon. She went to the door, and stood looking at me to let her oot. I opened it, and she kissed ma hand, and gave me ane last look. I canna forget it—these e’en o’ hers—I never saw sic a look in the e’en o’ ony beast. I went to the door and ca’d her after a wee. She didna come. I went oot and looked wi’ the lantern, and she was lying a’maist at the door. If she had made a sound, I would ha’e heard her. She deed easily, there’s nae doot.”

“I think she had a soul,” said Michael. “Don’t you remember telling me about the time she found a young bird that had dropped out of the nest, and how she stood and took care of it till you came? If she hadn’t had a

## TEARS IN MORTAL THINGS

soul, she would have caten it. Perhaps she's running round in Heaven now."

"Na," said old Colquhoun. "She'll no be rinnin' round. She'll be sitting still as a stone, no lippening to onything, no looking to ane side or the ither—watching, watching for her master, wi' those grave e'en, that were sae kind and canny—" old Colquhoun was overcome by his tears for a few minutes. "I maun dig her grave," he said at last.

Michael followed him silently, and silently helped him dig the grave. When they had dug for some time, old Colquhoun said:—"Ye ha'e done enough, laddie. It's ower heavy work for a bairn."

Michael looked up, and his eyes showed how sorry he felt. He stood leaning on his spade, unwilling to leave old Colquhoun alone at his dreary task.

At last he inquired:—"When are you going to take Tam to town?"

"This afternoon."

"Would you like me to come with you, and keep you company?"



## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

"I would," said old Colquhoun gratefully, "if your feyther can spare ye."

Michael stood still and silent till Colquhoun had finished the grave. Then the latter said:—"Noo, laddie, ye've helped me through this sair task—"

"I only did a little bit," said Michael.

"Ye helped me by being here. If I had been alane—but noo, ye maun rin hame. But first, I want ye to promise me something."

"I'll promise you anything," said Michael. "You're my greatest friend, except father of course, and I'll never like any one as well."

"Na, na, that's no what I ask, nor what I'll tak," said old Colquhoun. "That Nieder maun always be closer to ye than ony auld mon. Ye've played wi' him sin' ye were baith weans, and ve will till you're men, and there's nae bond like that. It's sometimes closer than brothers."

"I do like Nieder just as well as if he was my brother," said Michael. "Perhaps it would be more truthful to say that you and he both are my best friends."

## TEARS IN MORTAL THINGS

"Come, come, I dinna rank sae high as that," said old Colquhoun, his own whimsical smile breaking out over his grief furrowed face. "What aboot Mr. Jane Dove?"

"I like you even better than him," said Michael, slowly, but decidedly. "He did run his sword through ten Sacsanaigh policemen and helped me kill a lion, but then he's not real—at least, I like to think of him being real in a sort of a way, but he's not real like you."

"Na, he's no like me," said old Colquhoun indignantly. "I never was sic a savage, and if I had been I wouldna boast o't as he does, and clank ma sword sae fiercely."

"But Sacsanaigh policemen and lions have to be killed," said Michael.

"Perhaps, but there's ways and ways o' killin! He doesna do't as if it was a painfu' duty. But aboot that promise, Michael. A' I ask is that when you're wi' me ye'll still be the laddie ye are the noo, though ye grow to be a mon to a' the world."

"All right," said Michael.

But although Michael kept his promise, and

## THE GLORY AND THE DREAM

although he did not grow to be "a mon to a' the world" for many years, he began to be a man at heart that very day, when he learned to grieve with other people even when his own heart was full of happiness, and when his invisible friends had to take a step back to make room for those of flesh and blood.

THE END

